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John Lane, *The Bodley Head*

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Vanity

By D. Y. Cameron



VANITY

DY CAMERON 1896

The Blessed

By W. B. Yeats

CUMHAL the king, being angry and sad,
Came by the woody way
To the cave, where Dathi the Blessed had gone,
To hide from the troubled day.

Cumhal called out, bowing his head,
Till Dathi came and stood,
With blinking eyes, at the cave's edge,
Between the wind and the wood.

And Cumhal said, bending his knees,
"I come by the windy way
To gather the half of your blessedness
And learn the prayers that you say.

"I can bring you salmon out of the streams
And heron out of the skies."
But Dathi folded his hands and smiled
With the secrets of God in his eyes.

And

The Blessed

And Cumhal saw like a drifting smoke
All manner of blessedest souls,
Children and women and tonsured young men,
And old men with croziers and stoles.

“Praise God and God’s Mother,” Dathi said,
“For God and God’s Mother have sent
The blessedest souls that walk in the world
To fill your heart with content.”

“And who is the blessedest,” Cumhal said,
“Where all are comely and good ?
Is it those that with golden thuribles
Are singing about the wood ?”

“My eyes are blinking,” Dathi said,
“With the secrets of God half blind.
But I have found where the wind goes
And follow the way of the wind ;

“And blessedness goes where the wind goes
And when it is gone we die ;
And have seen the blessedest soul in the world,
By a spilled wine-cup lie.

“O blessedness comes in the night and the day,
And whither the wise heart knows ;
And one has seen, in the redness of wine,
The Incorruptible Rose :

“The

“ The Rose that must drop, out of sweet leaves,
The heaviness of desire,
Until Time and the World have ebbed away
In twilights of dew and fire ! ”

Two Pictures

By Muirhead Bone

I. Winter Evening on the Clyde

II. Old Houses off the Dry Gate, Glasgow



Merely Players

By Henry Harland

“MY dear,” said the elder man, “as I’ve told you a thousand times, what you need is a love-affair with a red-haired woman.”

“Bother women,” said the younger man, “and hang love-affairs. Women are a pack of samenesses, and love-affairs are damnable iterations.”

They were seated at a round table, gay with glass and silver, fruit and wine, in a pretty, rather high-ceiled little grey-and-gold breakfast-room. The French window stood wide open to the soft June day. From the window you could step out upon a small balcony; the balcony overhung a terrace; and a broad flight of steps from the terrace led down into a garden. You could not perceive the boundaries of the garden; in all directions it offered an indefinite perspective, a landscape of green lawns and shadowy alleys, bright parterres of flowers, fountains, and tall, bending trees.

I have spoken of the elder man and the younger, though really there could have been but a trifling disparity in their ages: the elder was perhaps thirty, the younger seven or eight and twenty.

In

In other respects, however, they were as unlike as unlike may be. Thirty was plump and rosy and full-blown, with a laughing good-humoured face, and merry big blue eyes ; eight and twenty, thin, tall, and listless-looking, his face pale and aquiline, his eyes dark, morose. They had finished their coffee, and now the plump man was nibbling sweetmeats, which he selected with much careful discrimination from an assortment in a porcelain dish. The thin man was drinking something green, possibly chartreuse.

"Women are a pack of samenesses," he grumbled, "and love-affairs are damnable iterations."

"Oh," cried out his comrade, in a tone of plaintive protest, "I said red-haired. You can't pretend that red-haired women are the same."

"The same, with the addition of a little henna," the pale young man argued wearily.

"It may surprise you to learn that I was thinking of red-haired women who are born red-haired," his friend remarked, from an altitude.

"In that case," said he, "I admit there is a difference—they have white eyelashes." And he emptied his glass of green stuff. "Is all this *à propos* of boots?" he questioned.

The other regarded him solemnly. "It's *à propos* of your immortal soul," he answered, nodding his head. "It's medicine for a mind diseased. The only thing that will wake you up, and put a little life and human nature in you, is a love-affair with a red-haired woman. Red in the hair means fire in the heart. It means all sorts of things. If you really wish to please me, Uncle, you'll go and fall in love with a red-haired woman."

The younger man, whom the elder addressed as Uncle, shrugged his shoulders, and gave a little sniff. Then he lighted a cigarette.

The elder man left the table, and went to the open window.

"Heavens,

"Heavens, what weather!" he exclaimed fervently. "The day is made of perfumed velvet. The air is a love-philtre. The whole world sings romance. And yet you—insensible monster!—you can sit there torpidly——" But abruptly he fell silent. His attention had been caught by something below, in the garden. He watched it for an instant from his place by the window; then he stepped forth upon the balcony, still watching. Suddenly, facing half-way round, "By my bauble, Nunky," he called to his companion, and his voice was tense with surprised exultancy, "she's got red hair!"

The younger man looked up with vague eyes. "Who? What?" he asked languidly.

"Come here, come here," his friend urged, beckoning him. "There," he indicated, when the pale man had joined him, "below there—to the right—picking roses. She's got red hair. She's sent by Providence."

A woman in a white frock was picking roses, in one of the alleys of the garden; rather a tall woman. Her back was turned towards her observers; but she wore only a light scarf of lace over her head, and her hair—soft-brown, fawn-colour, in its shadows—where the sun touched it, showed a soul of red.

The younger man frowned, and asked sharply, "Who the devil is she?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the other. "One of the Queen's women, probably. But whoever she is, she's got red hair."

The younger man frowned more fiercely still. "What is she doing in the King's private garden? This is a pretty state of things." He stamped his foot angrily. "Go down and turn her out. And I wish measures to be taken, that such trespassing may not occur again."

But

But the elder man laughed. "Hoity-toity! Calm yourself, Uncle. What would you have? The King is at a safe distance, hiding in one of his northern hunting-boxes, sulking, and nursing his spleen, as is his wont. When the King's away, the palace mice will play—at *lèse majesté*, the thrilling game. If you wish to stop them, persuade the King to come home and show his face. Otherwise, we'll gather our rosebuds while we may; and I'm not the man to cross a red-haired woman."

"You're the Constable of Bellefontaine," retorted his friend, "and it's your business to see that the King's orders are respected."

"The King's orders are so seldom respectable; and then, I've a grand talent for neglecting my business. I'm trying to elevate the Constableness of Bellefontaine into a sinecure," the plump man explained genially. "But I'm pained to see that your sense of humour is not escaping the general decay of your faculties. What you need is a love-affair with a red-haired woman; and yonder's a red-haired woman, dropped from the skies for your salvation. Go—engage her in talk—and fall in love with her. There's a dear," he pleaded.

"Dropped from the skies," the pale man repeated, with mild scorn. "As if I didn't know my Hilary! Of course, you've had her up your sleeve the whole time."

"Upon my soul and honour, you are utterly mistaken. Upon my soul and honour, I've never set eyes on her before," Hilary asseverated warmly.

"Ah, well, if that's the case," suggested the pale man, turning back into the room, "let us make an earnest endeavour to talk of something else."

II

The next afternoon they were walking in the park, at some distance from the palace, when they came to a bridge over a bit of artificial water ; and there was the woman of yesterday, leaning on the parapet, throwing bread-crumbs to the carp. She looked up, as they passed, and bowed, with a little smile, in acknowledgment of their raised hats.

When they were out of ear-shot, "H'm," muttered Hilary, "viewed at close quarters, she's a trifle disenchanting."

"Oh?" questioned his friend. "I thought her very good-looking."

"She has too short a nose," Hilary complained.

"What's the good of criticising particular features? The general effect of her face was highly pleasing. She looked intelligent, interesting ; she looked as if she would have something to say," the younger man insisted.

"It's very possible she has a tongue in her head," admitted Hilary ; "but we were judging her by the rules of beauty. For my fancy, she's too tall."

"She's tall, but she's well-proportioned. Indeed, her figure struck me as exceptionally fine. There was something sumptuous and noble about it," declared the other.

"There are scores of women with fine figures in this world," said Hilary. "But I'm sorely disappointed in her hair. Her hair is nothing like so red as I'd imagined."

"You're daft on the subject of red hair. Her hair's not carrot-colour, if you come to that. But there's plenty of red in it. It's brown, with red burning through. The red is managed with discretion—suggestively. And did you notice her eyes? She

has remarkably nice eyes—eyes with an expression. I thought her eyes and mouth were charming when she smiled,” the pale man affirmed.

“When she smiled? I didn’t see her smile,” reflected Hilary.

“Of course she smiled—when we bowed,” his friend reminded him.

“Oh, Ferdinand Augustus,” Hilary remonstrated, “will you never learn to treat words with some consideration? You call that smiling! Two men take off their hats, and a woman gives them just a look of bare acknowledgment; and Ferdinand Augustus calls it smiling!”

“Would you have wished for a broad grin?” asked Ferdinand Augustus. “Her face lighted up most graciously. I thought her eyes were charming. Oh, she’s certainly a good-looking woman, a distinctly handsome woman.”

“Handsome is that handsome does,” said Hilary.

“I miss the relevancy of that,” said Ferdinand Augustus.

“She’s a trespasser. ’Twas you yourself flew in a passion about it yesterday. Yesterday she was plucking the King’s roses: to-day she’s feeding the King’s carp.”

“‘When the King’s away, the palace mice will play.’ I venture to recall your own words to you,” Ferdinand remarked.

“That’s all very well. Besides, I spoke in jest. But there are limits. And it’s I who am responsible. I’m the Constable of Bellefontaine. Her trespassing appears to be habitual. We’ve caught her at it ourselves, two days in succession. I shall give instructions to the keepers, to warn her not to touch a flower, nor feed a bird, beast, or fish, in the whole of this demesne. Really, I admire the cool way in which she went on tossing bread-crumbs to the King’s carp under my very beard!” exclaimed Hilary, working himself into a fine state of indignation.

“Very

"Very likely she didn't know who you were," his friend reasoned. "And anyhow, your zeal is mighty sudden. You appear to have been letting things go at loose ends for I don't know how long; and all at once you take fire like tinder because a poor woman amuses herself by throwing bread to the carp. It's simply spite: you're disappointed in the colour of her hair. I shall esteem it a favour if you'll leave the keepers' instructions as they are. She's a damned good-looking woman; and I'll beg you not to interfere with her diversions."

"I can deny you nothing, Uncle," said Hilary, by this time restored to his accustomed easy temper; "and therefore she may make hay of the whole blessed establishment, if she pleases. But as for her good looks—that, you'll admit, is entirely a question of taste."

"Ah, well, then the conclusion is that your taste needs cultivation," laughed Ferdinand. "By-the-bye, I shall be glad if you will find out who she is."

"Thank you very much," cried Hilary. "I have a reputation to safeguard. Do you think I'm going to compromise myself, and set all my underlings a-sniggling, by making inquiries about the identity of a woman?"

"But," persisted Ferdinand, "if I ask you to do so, as your —"

"What?" was Hilary's brusque interruption.

"As your guest," said Ferdinand.

"*Mille regrets, impossible*, as the French have it," Hilary returned. "But as your host, I give you carte-blanche to make your own inquiries for yourself—if you think she's worth the trouble. Being a stranger here, you have, as it were, no character to lose."

"After all, it doesn't matter," said Ferdinand Augustus, with resignation.

But

III

But the next afternoon, at about the same hour, Ferdinand Augustus found himself alone, strolling in the direction of the little stone bridge over the artificial lakelet ; and there again was the woman, leaning upon the parapet, dropping bread-crumbs to the carp. Ferdinand Augustus raised his hat ; the woman bowed and smiled.

"It's a fine day," said Ferdinand Augustus.

"It's a fine day—but a weary one," the woman responded, with an odd little movement of the head.

Ferdinand Augustus was perhaps too shy to pursue the conversation ; perhaps he wanted but little here below, nor wanted that little long. At any rate, he passed on. There could be no question about her smile this time, he reflected ; it had been bright, spontaneous, friendly. But what did she mean, he wondered, by adding to his general panegyric of the day as fine, that special qualification of it as a weary one ? It was astonishing that any man should dispute her claim to beauty. She had really a splendid figure ; and her face was more than pretty, it was distinguished. Her eyes and her mouth, her clear-grey sparkling eyes, her softly curved red mouth, suggested many agreeable possibilities—possibilities of wit, and of something else. It was not till four hours later that he noticed the sound of her voice. At dinner, in the midst of a discussion with Hilary about a subject in no obvious way connected with her (about the Orient Express, indeed—its safety, speed, and comfort), it suddenly came back to him, and he checked a remark upon the advantages of the corridor-carriage, to exclaim in his soul, "She's got a delicious voice. If she sang, it would be a mezzo."

The

The consequence was that the following day he again bent his footsteps in the direction of the bridge.

"It's a lovely afternoon," he said, lifting his hat.

"But a weary one," said she, smiling, with a little pensive movement of the head.

"Not a weary one for the carp," he hinted, glancing down at the water, which boiled and bubbled with a greedy multitude.

"Oh, they have no human feelings," said she.

"Don't you call hunger a human feeling?" he inquired.

"They have no human feelings; but I never said we hadn't plenty of carp feelings," she answered him.

He laughed. "At all events, I'm pleased to find that we're of the same way of thinking."

"Are we?" asked she, raising surprised eyebrows.

"You take a healthy pessimistic view of things," he submitted.

"I? Oh, dear, no. I have never taken a pessimistic view of anything in my life."

"Except of this poor summer's afternoon, which has the fatal gift of beauty. You said it was a weary one."

"People have sympathies," she explained; "and besides, that is a watchword." And she scattered a handful of crumbs, thereby exciting a new commotion among the carp.

Her explanation no doubt struck Ferdinand Augustus as obscure; but perhaps he felt that he scarcely knew her well enough to press for enlightenment. "Let us hope that the fine weather will last," he said, with a polite salutation, and resumed his walk.

But, on the morrow, "You make a daily practice of casting your bread upon the waters," was his greeting to her. "Do you expect to find it at the season's end?"

"I find

"I find it at once," was her response, "in entertainment."

"It entertains you to see those shameless little gluttons making an exhibition of themselves!" he cried out.

"You must not speak disrespectfully of them," she reproved him. "Some of them are very old. Carp often live to be two hundred, and they grow grey, for all the world like men."

"They're like men in twenty particulars," asserted he, "though you, yesterday, denied it. See how the big ones elbow the little ones aside; see how fierce they all are in the scramble for your bounty. You wake their most evil passions. But the spectacle is instructive. It's a miniature presentment of civilisation. Oh, carp are simply brimful of human nature. You mentioned yesterday that they have no human feelings. You put your finger on the chief point of resemblance. It's the absence of human feeling that makes them so hideously human."

She looked at him with eyes that were interested, amused, yet not altogether without a shade of raillery in their depths. "That is what you call a healthy pessimistic view of things?" she questioned.

"It is an inevitable view if one honestly uses one's sight, or reads one's newspaper."

"Oh, then I would rather not honestly use my sight," said she; "and as for the newspaper, I only read the fashions. Your healthy pessimistic view of things can hardly add much to the joy of life."

"The joy of life!" he expostulated. "There's no joy in life. Life is one fabric of hardship, peril, and insipidity."

"Oh, how can you say that," cried she, "in the face of such beauty as we have about us here? With the pure sky and the sunshine, and the wonderful peace of the day; and then these lawns and glades, and the great green trees; and the sweet air, and the singing birds! No joy in life!"

"This

"This isn't life," he answered. "People who shut themselves up in an artificial park are fugitives from life. Life begins at the park gates with the natural countryside, and the squalid peasantry, and the sordid farmers, and the Jew money-lenders, and the uncertain crops."

"Oh, it's all life," insisted she, "the park and the countryside, and the virgin forest and the deep sea, with all things in them. It's all life. I'm alive, and I daresay you are. You would exclude from life all that is nice in life, and then say of the remainder, that only is life. You're not logical."

"Heaven forbid," he murmured devoutly. "I'm sure you're not either. Only stupid people are logical."

She laughed lightly. "My poor carp little dream to what far paradoxes they have led," she mused, looking into the water, which was now quite tranquil. "They have sailed away to their mysterious affairs among the lily-roots. I should like to be a carp for a few minutes, to see what it is like in those cool, dark places under the water. I am sure there are all sorts of strange things and treasures. Do you believe there are really water-maidens, like Undine?"

"Not nowadays," he informed her, with the confident fluency of one who knew. "There used to be; but, like so many other charming things, they disappeared with the invention of printing, the discovery of America, and the rise of the Lutheran heresy. Their prophetic souls——"

"Oh, but they had no souls, you remember," she corrected him.

"I beg your pardon; that was the belief that prevailed among their mortal contemporaries, but it has since been ascertained that they had souls, and very good ones. Their prophetic souls warned them what a dreary, dried-up planet the earth was destined to become,

become, with the steam-engine, the electric telegraph, compulsory education (falsely so-called), constitutional government, and the supremacy of commerce. So the elder ones died, dissolved in tears; and the younger ones migrated by evaporation to Neptune."

"Dear me, dear me," she marvelled. "How extraordinary that we should just have happened to light upon a topic about which you appear to have such a quantity of special knowledge! And now," she added, bending her head by way of valediction, "I must be returning to my duties."

And she moved off, towards the palace.

IV

And then, for three or four days, he did not see her, though he paid frequent enough visits to the feeding-place of the carp.

"I wish it would rain," he confessed to Hilary. "I hate the derisive cheerfulness of this weather. The birds sing, and the flowers smile, and every prospect breathes sodden satisfaction; and only man is bored."

"Yes, I own I find you dull company," Hilary responded, "and if I thought it would brisk you up, I'd pray with all my heart for rain. But what you need, as I've told you a thousand times, is a love-affair with a red-haired woman."

"Love-affairs are tedious repetitions," said Ferdinand. "You play with your new partner precisely the same game you played with the old: the same preliminary skirmishes, the same assault, the same feints of resistance, the same surrender, the same subsequent disenchantment. They're all the same, down to the very same scenes, words, gestures, suspicions, vows, exactions, recriminations, and

and final break-ups. It's a delusion of inexperience to suppose that in changing your mistress you change the sport. It's the same trite old book, that you've read and read in different editions, until you're sick of the very mention of it. To the deuce with love-affairs. But there's such a thing as rational conversation, with no sentimental nonsense. Now, I'll not deny that I should rather like to have an occasional bit of rational conversation with that red-haired woman we met the other day in the park. Only, the devil of it is, she never appears."

"And then, besides, her hair isn't red," added Hilary.

"I wonder how you can talk such folly," said Ferdinand.

"*C'est mon métier*, Uncle. You should answer me according to it. Her hair's not red. What little red there's in it, it requires strong sunlight to bring out. In shadow her hair's a sort of dull brownish-yellow," Hilary persisted.

"You're colour-blind," retorted Ferdinand. "But I won't quarrel with you. The point is, she never appears. So how can I have my bits of rational conversation with her?"

"How indeed?" echoed Hilary, with pathos. "And therefore you're invoking storm and whirlwind. But hang a horseshoe over your bed to-night, turn round three times as you extinguish your candle, and let your last thought before you fall asleep be the thought of a newt's liver and a blind man's dog; and it's highly possible she will appear to-morrow."

I don't know whether Ferdinand Augustus accomplished the rites that Hilary prescribed, but it is certain that she did appear on the morrow: not by the pool or the carp, but in quite another region of Bellefontaine, where Ferdinand Augustus was wandering at hazard, somewhat disconsolately. There was a wide green meadow, sprinkled with buttercups and daisies; and under a great tree, at this end of it, he suddenly espied her. She was seated on
the

the moss, stroking with one finger-tip a cockchafer that was perched upon another, and regarding the little monster with intent, meditative eyes. She wore a frock the bodice part of which was all drooping creamy lace ; she had thrown her hat and gloves aside ; her hair was in some slight, soft disarray ; her loose sleeve had fallen back, disclosing a very perfect wrist, and the beginning of a smooth white arm. Altogether she made an extremely pleasing picture, sweetly, warmly feminine. Ferdinand Augustus stood still, and watched her for an instant, before he spoke. Then—

“I have come to intercede with you on behalf of your carp,” he announced. “They are rending heaven with complaints of your desertion.”

She looked up, with a whimsical, languid little smile. “Are they ?” she asked lightly. “I’m rather tired of carp.”

He shook his head sorrowfully. “You will permit me to admire your fine, frank disregard of *their* feelings.”

“Oh, they have the past to remember,” she said. “And perhaps some day I shall go back to them. For the moment I amuse myself very well with cockchafers. They’re less tumultuous. And then carp won’t come and perch on your finger. And then, one likes a change.—Now fly away, fly away, fly away home ; your house is on fire, and your children will burn,” she crooned to the cockchafer, giving it never so gentle a push. But instead of flying away, it dropped upon the moss, and thence began to stumble, clumsily, blunderingly, towards the open meadow.

“You shouldn’t have caused the poor beast such a panic,” he reproached her. “You should have broken the dreadful news gradually. As you see, your sudden blurting of it out has deprived him of the use of his faculties. Don’t believe her,” he called

called after the cockchafer. "She's practising upon your credulity. Your house isn't on fire, and your children are all safe at school."

"Your consideration is entirely misplaced," she assured him, with the same slight whimsical smile. "The cockchafer knows perfectly well that his house isn't on fire, because he hasn't got any house. Cockchafers never have houses. His apparent concern is sheer affectation. He's an exceedingly hypocritical little cockchafer."

"I should call him an exceedingly polite little cockchafer. Hypocrisy is the compliment courtesy owes to falsehood. He pretended to believe you. He would not have the air of doubting a lady's word."

"You came as the emissary of the carp," she said; "and now you stay to defend the character of their rival."

"To be candid, I don't care a hang for the carp," he confessed brazenly. "The unadorned fact is that I am immensely glad to see you."

She gave a little laugh, and bowed with exaggerated ceremony "*Grand merci, Monsieur; vous me faites trop d'honneur,*" she murmured.

"Oh, no, not more than you deserve. I'm a just man, and I give you your due. I was boring myself into melancholy madness. The afternoon lay before me like a bumper of dust and ashes, that I must somehow empty. And then I saw you, and you dashed the goblet from my lips. Thank goodness (I said to myself), at last there's a human soul to talk with; the very thing I was pining for, a clever and sympathetic woman."

"You take a great deal for granted," laughed she.

"Oh, I know you're clever, and it pleases me to fancy that you're sympathetic. If you're not," he pleaded, "don't tell me so. Let me cherish my illusion."

She

She shook her head doubtfully. "I'm a poor hand at dissembling."

"It's an art you should study," said he. "If we begin by feigning an emotion, we're as like as not to end by genuinely feeling it."

"I've observed for myself," she informed him, "that if we begin by genuinely feeling an emotion, but rigorously conceal it, we're as like as not to end by feeling it no longer. It dies of suffocation. I've had that experience quite lately. There was a certain person whom I heartily despised and hated; and then, as chance would have it, I was thrown two or three times into his company; and for motives of expediency I disguised my antagonism. In the end, do you know, I found myself rather liking him?"

"Oh, women are fearfully and wonderfully made," he said.

"And so are some men," said she. "Could you oblige me with the name and address of a competent witch or warlock?" she added irrelevantly.

"What under the sun can you want with such an unholy thing?" he exclaimed.

"I want a hate-charm—something that I can take at night to revive my hatred of the man I was speaking of."

"Look here," he warned her, "I've not come all this distance under a scorching sun, to stand here now and talk of another man. Cultivate a contemptuous indifference towards him. Banish him from your mind and conversation."

"I'll try," she consented; "though if you were familiar with the circumstances, you'd recognise a certain difficulty in doing that." She reached for her gloves, and began to put one on. "Will you be so good as to tell me the time of day?"

He

He looked at his watch. "It's nowhere near time for you to be moving yet."

"You must not trifle about affairs of state," she said. "At a definite hour I have business at the palace."

"Oh, for that matter, so have I. But it's half-past four. To call half-past four a definite hour would be to do a violence to the language."

"It is earlier than I thought," she admitted, discontinuing her operation with the glove.

He smiled approval. "Your heart is in the right place, after all. It would have been inhuman to abandon me. Oh, yes, pleasantries apart, I am in a condition of mind in which solitude spells misery. And yet I am on speaking terms with but three living people whose society I prefer to it."

"You are indeed in sad case, then," she compassionated him. "But why should solitude spell misery? A man of wit like you should have plenty of resources within himself."

"Am I a man of wit?" he asked innocently.

Her eyes gleamed mischievously. "What is your opinion?"

"I don't know," he reflected. "Perhaps I might have been, if I had met a woman like you earlier in life."

"At all events," she laughed, "if you are not a man of wit, it is not for lack of courage. But why does solitude spell misery? Have you great crimes upon your conscience?"

"No, nothing so amusing. But when one is alone, one thinks; and when one thinks—that way madness lies."

"Then do you never think when you are engaged in conversation?" She raised her eyebrows questioningly.

"You should be able to judge of that by the quality of my remarks. At any rate, I feel."

"What do you feel?"

"When

"When I am engaged in conversation with you, I feel a general sense of agreeable stimulation ; and, in addition to that, at this particular moment—— But are you sure you really wish to know ? " he broke off.

" Yes, tell me," she said, with curiosity.

" Well, then, a furious desire to smoke a cigarette."

She laughed merrily. " I am so sorry I have no cigarettes to offer you."

" My pockets happen to be stuffed with them."

" Then, do, please, light one."

He produced his cigarette-case, but he seemed to hesitate about lighting a cigarette.

" Have you no matches ? " she inquired.

" Yes, thank you, I have matches. I was only thinking."

" It has become a solitude, then ? " she cried.

" It is a case of conscience, it is an ethical dilemma. How do I know—the modern woman is capable of anything—how do I know that you may not yourself be a smoker ? But if you are, it will give you pain to see me enjoying my cigarette, while you are without one."

" It would be civil to begin by offering me one," she suggested.

" That is exactly the liberty I dared not take—oh, there are limits to my boldness. But you have saved the situation." And he offered her his cigarette-case.

She shook her head. " Thank you, I don't smoke." And her eyes were full of teasing laughter, so that he laughed too, as he finally applied a match-flame to his cigarette. " But you may allow me to examine your cigarette-case," she went on. " It looks like a pretty bit of silver." And when he had handed it to her, she exclaimed, " It is engraved with the royal arms."

" Yes. Why not ? " said he.

" Does

"Does it belong to the King?"

"It was a present from the King."

"To you? You are a friend of the King?" she asked, with some eagerness.

"I will not deceive you," he replied. "No, not to me. The King gave it to Hilary Clairevoix, the Constable of Bellefontaine; and Hilary, who's a careless fellow, left it lying about in his music-room; and I came along and pocketed it. It is a pretty bit of silver, and I shall never restore it to its rightful owner, if I can help it."

"But you are a friend of the King's," she repeated, with insistence.

"I have not that honour. Indeed, I have never seen him. I am a friend of Hilary's; I am his guest. He has stayed with me in England—I am an Englishman—and now I am returning his visit."

"That is well," said she. "If you were a friend of the King, you would be an enemy of mine."

"Oh?" he wondered. "Why is that?"

"I hate the King," she answered simply.

"Dear me, what a capacity you have for hating! This is the second hatred you have avowed within the hour. What has the King done to displease you?"

"You are an Englishman. Has our King's reputation not reached England yet? He is the scandal of Europe. What has he done? But no—do not encourage me to speak of him. I should grow too heated," she said strenuously.

"On the contrary, I pray of you, go on," urged Ferdinand Augustus. "Your King is a character that interests me more than you can think. His reputation has indeed reached England, and I have conceived a great curiosity about him. One only
hears

hears vague rumours, to be sure, nothing specific ; but one has learned to think of him as original and romantic. You know him. Tell me a lot about him."

"Oh, I do not know him personally. That is an affliction I have as yet been spared." Then, suddenly, "Mercy upon me, what have I said !" she cried. "I must 'knock wood,' or the evil spirits will bring me that mischance to-morrow." And she fervently tapped the bark of the tree beside her with her knuckles.

Ferdinand Augustus laughed. "But if you do not know him personally, why do you hate him ?"

"I know him very well by reputation. I know how he lives, I know what he does and leaves undone. If you are curious about him, ask your friend Hilary. He is the King's foster-brother. *He* could tell you stories," she said meaningly.

"I have asked him. But Hilary's lips are sealed. He depends upon the King's protection for his fortune, and the palace-walls (I suppose he fears) have ears. But you can speak without danger. He is the scandal of Europe ? There's nothing I love like scandal. Tell me all about him."

"You have not come all this distance under a scorching sun, to stand here now and talk of another man," she reminded him.

"Oh, but kings are different," he argued. "Tell me about your King."

"I can tell you at once," said she, "that our King is the frankest egotist in two hemispheres. You have learned to think of him as original and romantic ? No ; he is simply intensely selfish and intensely silly. He is a King Do-Nothing, a *Roi Fainéant*, who shirks and evades all the duties and responsibilities of his position ; who builds extravagant châteaux in
remote

remote parts of the country, and hides in them, alone with a few obscure companions ; who will never visit his capital, never show his face to his subjects ; who takes no sort of interest in public business or the welfare of his kingdom, and leaves the entire government to his ministers ; who will not even hold a court, or give balls or banquets ; who, in short, does nothing that a king ought to do, and might, for all the good we get of him, be a mere stranger in the land, a mere visitor, like yourself. So closely does he seclude himself, that I doubt if there be a hundred people in the whole country who have ever seen him, to know him. If he travels from one place to another, it is always in the strictest incognito, and those who then chance to meet him never have any reason to suspect that he is not a private person. His very effigy on the coin of the realm is reputed to be false, resembling him in no wise. But I could go on for ever," she said, bringing her indictment to a termination.

"Really," said Ferdinand Augustus, "I cannot see that you have alleged anything very damaging. A *Roi Fainéant*? But every king of a modern constitutional state is, willy-nilly, that. He can do nothing but sign bills which he generally disapproves of, lay foundation-stones, set the fashion in hats, and bow and look pleasant as he drives through the streets. He has no power for good, and mighty little for evil. He is just a State Prisoner. It seems to me that your particular King has shown some sense in trying to escape so much as he may of the prison's irksomeness. I should call it rare bad luck to be born a king. Either you've got to shirk your kingship, and then fair ladies dub you the scandal of Europe ; or else you've got to accept it, and then you're as happy as a man in a strait-waistcoat. And then, and then ! Oh, I can think of a thousand unpleasantnesses attendant upon the condition of a king. Your King, as I understand it, has said to

himself, 'Hang it all, I didn't ask to be born a king, but since that is my misfortune, I will seek to mitigate it as much as I am able. I am, on the whole, a human being, with a human life to live, and only, probably, three-score-and-ten years in which to live it. Very good; I will live my life. I will lay no foundation-stones, nor drive about the streets bowing and looking pleasant. I will live my life, alone with the few people I find to my liking. I will take the cash and let the credit go.' I am bound to say," concluded Ferdinand Augustus, "that your King has done exactly what I should have done in his place."

"You will never, at least," said she, "defend the shameful manner in which he has behaved towards the Queen. It is for that, I hate him. It is for that, that we, the Queen's gentlewomen, have adopted '*Tis a weary day*' as a watchword. It will be a weary day until we see the King on his knees at the Queen's feet, craving her forgiveness."

"Oh? What has he done to the Queen?" asked Ferdinand.

"What has he done! Humiliated her as never woman was humiliated before. He married her by proxy at her father's court; and she was conducted with great pomp and circumstance into his kingdom—to find what? That he had fled to one of his absurd castles in the north, and refused to see her! He has remained there ever since, hiding like—but there is nothing in created space to compare him to. Is it the behaviour of a gentleman, of a gallant man, not to say a king?" she cried warmly, looking up at him with shining eyes, her cheeks faintly flushed.

Ferdinand Augustus bowed. "The Queen is fortunate in her advocate. I have not heard the King's side of the story. I can, however, imagine excuses for him. Suppose that his ministers, for reasons of policy, importuned and importuned him to marry a certain princess, until he yielded in mere fatigue. In that case,
why

why should he be bothered further? Why should he add one to the tedious complications of existence by meeting the bride he never desired? Is it not sufficient that, by his complaisance, she should have gained the rank and title of a queen? Besides, he may be in love with another woman. Or perhaps—but who can tell? He may have twenty reasons. And anyhow, you cannot deny to the situation the merit of being highly ridiculous. A husband and wife who are not personally acquainted! It is a delicious commentary upon the whole system of marriages by proxy. You confirm my notion that your King is original.”

“He may have twenty reasons,” answered she, “but he had better have twenty terrors. It is perfectly certain that the Queen will be revenged.”

“How so?” asked Ferdinand Augustus.

“The Queen is young, high-spirited, moderately good-looking, and unspeakably incensed. Trust a young, high-spirited, and handsome woman, outraged by her husband, to know how to avenge herself. Oh, some day he will see.”

“Ah, well, he must take his chances,” Ferdinand sighed. “Perhaps he is liberal minded enough not to care.”

“I am far from meaning the vulgar revenge you fancy,” she put in quickly. “The Queen’s revenge will be subtle and unexpected. She is no fool, and she will not rest until she has achieved it. Oh, he will see!”

“I had imagined it was the curse of royalty to be without true friends,” said Ferdinand Augustus. “The Queen has a very ardent one in you.”

“I am afraid I cannot altogether acquit myself of interested motives,” she disclaimed modestly. “I am of her Majesty’s household, and my fortunes must rise and fall with hers. But I am honestly indignant with the King.”

“The

"The poor King! Upon my soul, he has my sympathy," said Ferdinand.

"You are terribly ironical," said she.

"Irony was ten thousand leagues from my intention," he protested. "In all sincerity the object of your indignation has my sympathy. I trust you will not consider it an impertinence if I say that I already count you among the few people I have met whose good opinion is a matter to be coveted."

She had risen while he was speaking, and now she bobbed him a little courtesy. "I will show my appreciation of yours by taking flight before anything can happen to alter it," she laughed, moving away.

"You are singularly animated to-night," said Hilary, contemplating him across the dinner-table; "yet, at the same time, singularly abstracted. You have the air of a man who is rolling something pleasant under his tongue, something sweet and secret; it might be a hope, it might be a recollection. Where have you passed the afternoon? You've been about some mischief, I'll warrant. By Jove, you set me thinking. I'll wager a penny you've been having a bit of rational conversation with that brown-haired woman."

"Her hair is red," Ferdinand Augustus rejoined, with firmness. "And her conversation," he added sadly, "is anything you please but rational. She spent her whole time picking flaws in the character of the King. She talked downright treason. She said he was the scandal of Europe and the frankest egotist in two hemispheres."

"Ah? She appears to have some instinct for the correct use of language," commented Hilary.

"All

"All the same, I rather like her," Ferdinand went on, "and I'm half inclined to undertake her conversion. She has a gorgeous figure—there's something rich and voluptuous about it. And there are depths of promise in her eyes; there are worlds of humour and of passion. And she has a mouth—oh, of a fulness, of a softness, of a warmth! And a chin, and a throat, and hands! And then, her voice. There's a mellowness yet a crispness, there's a vibration, there's a something in her voice that assures you of a golden temperament beneath it. In short, I'm half inclined to follow your advice, and go in for a love-adventure with her."

"Oh, but love-adventures—I have it on high authority—are damnable iterations," objected Hilary.

"That is very true; they are," Ferdinand agreed. "But the life of man is woven of damnable iterations. Tell me of any single thing that isn't a damnable iteration, and I'll give you a quarter of my fortune. The day and the night, the seasons and the years, the fair weather and the foul, breakfast and luncheon and dinner—all are damnable iterations. If there's any reality behind the doctrine of metempsychosis, death, too, is a damnable iteration. There's no escaping damnable iterations: there's nothing new under the sun. But as long as one is alive, one must do something. It's sure to be something in its essence identical with something one has done before; but one must do something. Why not, then, a love-adventure with a woman that attracts you?"

"Women are a pack of samenesses," said Hilary despondently.

"Quite so," assented Ferdinand. "Women, and men too, are a pack of samenesses. We're all struck with the same die, of the same metal, at the same mint. Our resemblance is intrinsic, fundamental; our differences are accidental and skin-deep. We have

have the same features, organs, dimensions, with but a hair's-breadth variation ; the same needs, instincts, propensities ; the same hopes, fears, ideas. One man's meat is another man's meat ; one man's poison is another man's poison. We are as like to one another as the leaves on the same tree. Skin us, and (save for your fat) the most skilled anatomist could never distinguish you from me. Women are a pack of samenesses ; but, hang it all, one has got to make the best of a monotonous universe. And this particular woman, with her red hair and her eyes, strikes me as attractive. She has some fire in her composition, some fire and flavour. Anyhow, she attracts me ; and—I think I shall try my luck."

"Oh, Nunky, Nunky," murmured Hilary, shaking his head, "I am shocked by your lack of principle. Have you forgotten that you are a married man ?"

"That will be my safeguard. I can make love to her with a clear conscience. If I were single, she might, justifiably enough, form matrimonial expectations for herself."

"Not if she knew you," said Hilary.

"Ah, but she doesn't know me—and shan't," said Ferdinand Augustus. "I will take care of that."

VI

And then, for what seemed to him an eternity, he never once encountered her. Morning and afternoon, day after day, he roamed the park of Bellefontaine from end to end, in all directions, but never once caught sight of so much as the flutter of her garments. And the result was that he began to grow seriously sentimental. "*Im wunderschönen Monat Mai!*" It was June,

to be sure ; but the meteorological influences were, for that, only the more potent. He remembered her shining eyes now as not merely whimsical and ardent, but as pensive, appealing, tender ; he remembered her face as a face seen in starlight, ethereal and mystic ; and her voice as low music, far away. He recalled their last meeting as a treasure he had possessed and lost ; he blamed himself for the frivolity of his talk and manner, and for the ineffectual impression of him this must have left upon her. Perpetually thinking of her, he was perpetually sighing, perpetually suffering strange, sudden, half painful, half delicious commotions in the tissues of his heart. Every morning he rose with a replenished fund of hope : this day at last would produce her. Every night he went to bed pitying himself as bankrupt of hope. And all the while, though he pined to talk of her, a curious bashfulness withheld him ; so that, between him and Hilary, for quite a fortnight she was not mentioned. It was Hilary who broke the silence.

"Why so pale and wan ?" Hilary asked him. "Will, when looking well won't move her, looking ill prevail ?"

"Oh, I am seriously love-sick," cried Ferdinand Augustus, welcoming the subject. "I went in for a sensation, and I've got a real emotion."

"Poor youth ! And she won't look at you, I suppose ?" was Hilary's method of commiseration.

"I have not seen her for a mortal fortnight. She has completely vanished. And for the first time in my life I'm seriously in love."

"You're incapable of being seriously in love," said Hilary.

"I had always thought so myself," admitted Ferdinand Augustus. "The most I had ever felt for any woman was a sort of mere lukewarm desire, a sort of mere meaningless titillation.

But

But this woman is different. She's as different to other women as wine is different to toast-and-water. She has the *feu-sacré*. She's done something to the very inmost soul of me ; she's laid it bare, and set it quivering and yearning. She's made herself indispensable to me ; I can't live without her. Ah, you don't know what she's like. She's like some strange, beautiful, burning spirit. Oh, for an hour with her, I'd give my kingdom. To touch her hand—to look into those eyes of hers—to hear her speak to me ! I tell you squarely, if she'd have me, I'd throw up the whole scheme of my existence, I'd fly with her to the uttermost ends of the earth. But she has totally disappeared, and I can do nothing to recover her without betraying my identity ; and that would spoil everything. I want her to love me for myself, believing me to be a plain man, like you or anybody. If she knew who I am, how could I ever be sure ? ”

“ You *are* in a bad way,” said Hilary, looking at him with amusement. “ And yet, I'm gratified to see it. Her hair is not so red as I could wish, but, after all, it's reddish ; and you appear to be genuinely aflame. It will do you no end of good ; it will make a man of you—a plain man, like me or anybody. But your impatience is not reasoned. A fortnight ? You have not met her for a fortnight ? My dear, to a plain man a fortnight's nothing. It's just an appetiser. Watch and wait, and you'll meet her before you know it. And now, if you will excuse me, I have business in another quarter of the palace.”

Ferdinand Augustus, left to himself, went down into the garden. It was a wonderful summer's evening, made indeed (if I may steal a phrase from Hilary) of perfumed velvet. The sun had set an hour since, but the western sky was still splendid, like
a dark

a dark tapestry, with sombre reds and purples ; and in the east hung the full moon, so brilliant, so apposite, as to seem somehow almost like a piece of premeditated decoration. The waters of the fountains flashed silverly in its light ; glossy leaves gave back dim reflections ; here and there, embowered among the trees, white statues gleamed ghost-like. Away in the park somewhere, innumerable frogs were croaking, croaking ; subdued by distance, the sound gained a quality that was plaintive and unearthly. The long façade of the palace lay obscure in shadow ; only at the far end, in the Queen's apartments, were the windows alight. But, quite close at hand, the moon caught a corner of the terrace ; and here, presently, Ferdinand Augustus became aware of a human figure. A woman was standing alone by the balustrade, gazing out into the wondrous night. Ferdinand Augustus's heart began to pound ; and it was a full minute before he could command himself sufficiently to move or speak.

At last, however, he approached her. "Good evening," he said, looking up from the pathway.

She glanced down at him, leaning upon the balustrade. "Oh, how do you do?" She smiled her surprise. She was in evening dress, a white robe embroidered with pearls, and she wore a tiara of pearls in her hair. She had a light cloak thrown over her shoulders, a little cape trimmed with swan's-down. "Heavens !" thought Ferdinand Augustus. "How magnificent she is !"

"It's a hundred years since I have seen you," he said.

"Oh, is it so long as that ? I should have imagined it was something like a fortnight. Time passes quickly."

"That is a question of psychology. But now at last I find you when I least expect you."

"I have slipped out for a moment," she explained, "to enjoy
this

this beautiful prospect. One has no such view from the Queen's end of the terrace. One cannot see the moon."

"I cannot see the moon from where I am standing," said he.

"No because you have turned your back upon it," said she.

"I have chosen between two visions. If you were to authorise me to join you, aloft there, I could see both."

"I have no power to authorise you," she laughed, "the terrace is not my property. But if you choose to take the risks——"

"Oh," he cried, "you are good, you are kind." And in an instant he had joined her on the terrace, and his heart was fluttering wildly with its sense of her nearness to him. He could not speak.

"Well, now you can see the moon. Is it all your fancy painted?" she asked, with her whimsical smile. Her face was exquisitely pale in the moonlight, her eyes glowed. Her voice was very soft.

His heart was fluttering wildly, poignantly. "Oh," he began—but broke off. His breath trembled. "I cannot speak," he said.

She arched her eyebrows. "Then we have made some mistake. This will never be you, in that case."

"Oh, yes, it is I. It is the other fellow, the gabbler, who is not myself," he contrived to tell her.

"You lead a double life, like the villain in the play?" she suggested.

"You must have your laugh at my expense; have it, and welcome. But I know what I know," he said.

"What do you know?" she asked quickly.

"I know that I am in love with you," he answered.

"Oh, only that," she said, with an air of relief.

"Only that. But that is a great deal. I know that I love you—oh, yes, unutterably. If you could see yourself! You are absolutely

absolutely unique among women. I would never have believed it possible for any woman to make me feel what you have made me feel. I have never spoken like this to any woman in all my life. Oh, you may laugh. It is the truth, upon my word of honour. If you could look into your eyes,—yes, even when you are laughing at me! I can see your wonderful burning spirit shining deep, deep in your eyes. You do not dream how different you are to other women. You are a wonderful burning poem. They are platitudes. Oh, I love you unutterably. There has not been an hour since I last saw you that I have not thought of you, loved you, longed for you. And now here you stand, you yourself, beside me! If you could see into my heart, if you could see what I feel!”

She looked at the moon, with a strange little smile, and was silent.

“Will you not speak to me?” he cried.

“What would you have me say?” she asked still looking away.

“Oh, you know, you know what I would have you say.”

“I am afraid you will not like the only thing I can say.” She turned, and met his eyes. “I am a married woman, and—I am in love with my husband.”

Ferdinand Augustus stood aghast. “Oh, my God!” he groaned.

“Yes, though he has given me little enough reason to do so, I have fallen in love with him,” she went on pitilessly. “So you must get over your fancy for me. After all, I am a total stranger to you. You do not even know my name.”

“Will you tell me your name?” asked Ferdinand humbly. “It will be something to remember.”

“My name is Marguerite.”

“Marguerite!

“Marguerite ! Marguerite !” He repeated it caressingly. “It is a beautiful name. But it is also the name of the Queen.”

“I am the only person named Marguerite in the Queen’s court,” said she.

“What !” cried Ferdinand Augustus.

“Oh, it is a wise husband who knows his own wife,” laughed she.

And then— But I think I have told enough.

Sonnets

From the Portuguese
of Anthero de Quental

By Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D.

WITH thistle's azure flower my home I hung,
And did with redolence of musk perfume,
And, robed in purple raiment's glowing gloom,
Low prelude to my coming carol sung.
Spikenard, from Orient groves transported, clung
To brow and hand ; if so my humble room
Might undishonoured harbour her, for whom
Soon should its welcoming door be widely flung.
What princess, fairy, angel from above,
Some radiant sphere relinquishing for me,
Bowed to my habitation poor and cold ?
Princess nor sprite nor fay, but memory
Of thee it was that came to knock where Love
Expecting sat behind a gate of gold.

II

Royal I dream myself, and realm is mine
Isled far apart in Oriental seas,
Where night is lustrous glow and balmy peace,
And the full moon doth on the waters shine.
Spices their aromatic breath consign
To lucid space untroubled by a breeze,
And 'neath the shadow of the fringing trees
Gleams the light foamwork of the lipping brine.
There I in ivory pavilion keep,
And question with myself, and find no end ;
But thou, my Love, dost wander through the glade
Of sward seclude, where moon and night contend ;
Or couched beneath a palm dost taste of sleep,
Low at thy feet thy guardian lion laid.

III

When, hand in hand enlinked, we hie to fill
Our baskets with the valley's modest flowers ;
Or at a bound the grassy crest is ours
Of the high mount, where dews are sparkling still ;
Or, gazing from the solitary hill,
View the pale sea remote, as evening lours
And clouds, like ruins of fantastic towers,
Are piled and crumbled at the breeze's will :
How oft doth silence seize on thee at once !
With light, whence caught who knows ? thine eye is rife,
Thy

Thy clasped hand throbs in mine, thy bloom departs.
 The water and the wind chant orisons ;
 And the eternal poetry of life
 Little by little steals into our hearts.

IV

May rose and lily on thy bosom shower !
 And hymns triumphal peal around thy way !
 Glory and peace to thee, whose spell doth sway
 This captive soul submissive to thy power.
 Sky dedicate her star, and earth her flower !
 Shade, scent and song thy summons all obey !
 Sea roll thee dreams from her resounding bay
 When slow tides ripple in the moonlit hour !
 Preserve no memory of me who weep ;
 Be all my worship banished from thy thought ;
 But should'st thou pass regardless by, the while
 I sit lamenting, from my tears be wrought
 A fragrant carpeting, a flowery heap
 For thee to crush, or scatter with a smile.

O let her go, the bird of brood and nest
 By wicked hands despoiled ! forth let her fare
 On wings to the illimitable air
 Dispread to waft her from the spot unblest.
 The drifting bark that tempest from the west
 Smote at sunseting, let the billow bear
 O'er the void deep, of mast and rudder bare,
 Till the abyss engulf, let drive, 'tis best.

The spirit waning to its hour extreme,
That faith and joy and peace may never know,
Away with it to death without a dream !
The last faint notes that falter in the flow
Of dying strains, and dying hope's last gleam,
Last breath, last love—O let them, let them go !

VI

Where at the precipice's foot the wave
Ceaseless with sullen monotone doth roar,
And the wild wind flies plaining to the shore,
Be my dead heart committed to the grave.
There let the suns with fiery torrents lave
The parching dust, till summer shines no more,
And eddies of dry sand incessant soar
Around, when whirlblasts of the winter rave.
And with its own undoing be undone,
And with its viewless motes enforced to flit,
Rapt far away upon the hurricane,
All sighs and strifes that idly cumbered it,
And idlest Love, sunk to oblivion
In bosom of the barren bitter main.

VII

This sable steed, whose hoofs with clangour smite
My sense, while dreamful shade on earth is cast,
Onward in furious gallop thundering past
In the fantastic alleys of the night,

Whence

Whence cometh he ? What realms of gloom or light
Behind him lie ? Through what weird terrors last
Thus clothed in stormy grandeur sped so fast,
Dishevelling his mane with wild affright ?
A youth with mien of martial prowess, blent
With majesty no shock disquieteth,
Vested in steely armour sheening clear,
Fearless bestrides the terrible portent.
“ I,” the tremendous steed declares, “ am Death ! ”
“ And I am Love ! ” responds the cavalier.

The Christ of Toro

By Mrs. Cunningham Graham

I

The Prediction

VERY many centuries ago, when monastic life was as much a life of the people as any other life, a man resolved to enter a certain monastery in a small town of Castille. He had in his time been many things. The son of a wealthy merchant, he had spent much of his youth in Flanders, where he went at his father's bidding to purchase merchandise and to sell it. Instead of devoting himself to the mysteries of trade, he learnt those of painting from the most famous masters of the Low Countries. His father dead, his father's fame as one of the greatest merchants of the day kept his credit going for some time, but at last he fell into difficulties. Menaced with ruin, he became a soldier, and fought under Ferdinand and Isabella before the walls of Granada. His bravery procured him no reward, and he retired from the wars and married. For a few years he was happy—at least he knew he had been so when he knelt for the last time beside his wife's bier. And then he bethought himself of this monastery that he had once seen casually on a summer's day. There he might

might find rest; there end the turmoil of an unlucky and disappointed life. He saw the quiet cloisters flooded with sunlight looking out into the greenery of the monastery garden. He heard the splashing of the drops from the fountain fall peacefully on the hot silence. Nay, he even smelt the powerful scent of the great myrtle bushes whose shadows fell blue and cool athwart the burning alleys.

His servants' tears fell fast as he distributed amongst them the last fragments of his once immense fortune; they fell faster when they saw the solitary figure disappearing over the ridge of the sandy path, for, although they knew not of his resolution, they felt that they should see his face no more.

But we cannot escape from ourselves, even in the cloister. There he felt the fires of an ambition that untoward circumstances had chilled in his youth. The longing to leave some tangible record of a life that he knew had been useless, fell upon him and consumed him. He opened his mind to the prior. The prior was a man of the world (there have always been such in the cloister), and knew the workings of the human heart.

The monks began to whisper to each other that Brother Sebastian was changed. Sometimes, at vespers, one or other would look at him and note that his eyes had lost their melancholy, and were as bright as stars. Then it got rumoured about amongst them that he was painting a picture.

The monastery is, and especially a mediæval one, full of schisms and cabals. In it the rigour of the ultra-pietists who stormed heaven by fire and sword, and whose hearts were shut to all kindliness and charity, was to be found side by side with mild and gentle spirits, who, through the gift of tears and ecstatic reverie, caught sight of the mystic and universal Bond of Love, which, linked together in one common union, Nature, animal,
and

and sinner. To them all things palpitated in a Divine Mist of Benignity and Tenderness—the terrorist and the rigorist on the one hand ; on the other, serenity, charity, and compassion.

Now there was a certain Brother Matthias in this convent—the hardest, bitterest zealot in the community, whom even his own partisans looked at with dread. Of his birth little was known, for all are equal in Religion, but the knotted joints of his hairy hands, the hair which bristled black against his low furrowed brow, were those of a peasant. No arm so strong or merciless as his to wield the discipline on recalcitrant shoulders (neither, it is fair to state, did he spare his own). The more Blood the more Religion ; the more Blood the more Heaven. He practised austere all the theological virtues as far as his lights and his mental capacity permitted, and it was as hard and as stubborn as the clods which he had ploughed in his youth. He did not despise, but bitterly loathed, all books or learning as the works and lures of Satan. If he had had his will he would have burnt the convent library long ago in the big cloister, all except the Breviary and the offices therein contained. The liberal Arts, and those who practised or had any skill in them, he would fain have banished from the convent. The flowers even that grew in the friars' garden he neither smelt nor looked at. They were beautiful, and Sin lurked in the heart of the rose, and all the pleasures of the senses, and all the harmonies of sound. It was a small, black, narrow world that mind of his, heaped up with the impenetrable shadows of Ignorance, Intolerance, Contempt, and Fear.

“ Better he went and dug in the vineyard,” he would mutter sourly, when he saw some studious Brother absorbed in a black-letter Tome of Latinity in the monastery library. Once when Fray Blas the sculptor had finished one of his elaborate crucifixes
of

of ivory, he had watched his opportunity and, seizing it unperceived in his brawny hand, waited until nightfall and threw it into the convent well with the words, "*Vade Retro! Satanas!*"

One day, as he passed through the corridor into which opened Sebastian's cell, his steps were arrested by the murmur or voices which floated through the half-open door. He leaned against the Gothic bay of the marble pillars that looked into the cloister below, uncertain whether to go or stay. The hot sunlight filled the dusky corridor with a drowsy sense of sleep and stillness. The swallows flitted about the eaves, chirping as they wheeled hither and thither with a throbbing murmur of content. The roses climbed into the bay, lighting up the dusky corridors with sprays of crimson; they brushed against his habit. He beat them off contemptuously. The eavesdropper could see nothing, hear nothing, but what was framed in, or came through, that half-open door.

Suddenly the two friars, the Prior and Fray Sebastian, were startled by a tall figure framed suddenly in the doorway. Blocking the light, it loomed on them like the gigantic and menacing image of Elijah on the painted retablo of the High Altar. Its face was livid. From underneath the black bushy brows the eyes burned like coals of fire. The figure shook and the hands twitched for a moment of speechless, unutterable indignation. In that moment Sebastian turned, and placed the canvas, which stood in the middle of the cell, with its face against the wall, and the two men quietly faced their antagonist.

Fray Matthias strode forward, as if to strike them.

"By Him that cursed the money-changers in the temple," he thundered, "what abomination is this ye have brewing in the House of the Lord? What new-fangled devilries are here? *This*

is fasting, *this* is discipline, *this* is the prayer without ceasing ye came here to perform. One holy monk daubing colours on a bit of rag, and this reverend father, who should be the pattern and exemplar of his community, aiding and abetting him !”

“Silence !” the Prior said. The one word was not ungently spoken, but it was that of a man accustomed to command and to be obeyed, and imposed on the coarse-grained peasant before him ; nay, even left his burst of prophetic ire trembling on his tongue unspoken. The Prior had drawn his slender figure up to its full height ; a spot of red tinged his cheeks, as with quiet composure he faced his aggressor. Never before had Matthias seen him as he was now, for he had always despised him for a timid, delicate, effeminate soul, scarce fit to rule the turbulent world of the convent. For a brief moment the Prior of Toro became again that Count of Treviño who had led the troops of his noble house to victory on more than one occasion, and whose gallant doings even then were not quite forgotten in the court and world of Spain. The habitual respect of the lowly-born for a man of higher station and finer fibre asserted itself. He stood before his Prior pale and downcast, like a frightened hound.

“Listen,” the prior continued. “Oh you, my brother, of little charity. What *you* call zeal, *I* call malice. To *you* has been given your talent. It led you to these convent walls. Develop it. To this, my brother, and *your* brother, although you seem to know it not, has been entrusted another talent. Who are you, to declaim against the gifts of God ? There are talents, ay ! and even virtues, that neither fructify to the owner nor to the world. Will *you* have saved other men from sin or helped the sinner by your flagellations and *your* fastings ? He who has so little kindness in his heart, I fear me, would do neither. Yea, he would scarce save them if he could. Nay, brother,” he added softly, “I doubt me
if

if ye would have done what He did." Moving swiftly to the wall, he turned the picture full on the gaze of the astounded brother. "Behold Love!"

It was a marvellous picture, fresh and living from the brain of its creator. Every speck of colour had been placed on with a hand sure of its power. Christ nailed to the cross; His hands and feet seemed to palpitate as if still imbued with some mysterious vestiges of life. The drops of blood which fell slowly down might have been blood indeed. But it was in the face—not in the vivid realism of the final scene of the tremendous drama—that the beauty lay. One doubted if it did not retain some strange element of life, some hidden vitality, rather felt than actually perceived, under the pallid flesh. As the light flickered over them, one would have said that the eyelids had not yet lost their power of contractability, as if at any moment one would find them wide open under the shadow of the brow; the mouth seemed still fresh with ghostly pleadings.

"Go, brother," said the Prior, "and meditate, and when you have learnt to do even such as this for your brethren, then turn the money-changers from the hallowed temple. I tell you"—and his face grew like one inspired—"I tell you this picture shall yet save a soul, unbind the ropes of sin, and lead a tortured one to heaven. Perhaps when we who stand here are gone," he added musingly. "Go, brother, and meditate."

When the picture was finished and its frame ready, the sculptured wood dazzling in its fresh gold and silver, on the day of St. Christopher, borne high amidst a procession of the monks, it was taken and hung up before the high altar.

Whether Brother Sebastian painted any more pictures ; whether Brother Matthais learnt love and charity when they and the Prior passed from the generations of men, the old chronicles which tell the story omit to state, or whether they left any further record of their lives in the convent beyond this scene which has been kept alive by a monkish chronicler's hand.

It is even a matter of doubt what cloister slab covers the dust of the Count of Treviño, Prior of the Augustinian monastery of Toro, or of Sebastian Gomez, the painter, or of Fray Matthias, the peasant's son.

But now comes the strange part of the relation, for the picture, the miracle-working picture, is still to be seen in the monastery of Toro. The Prior, the painter, the peasant died, but the picture lived. For a century at least after their death it listened from its station above the high altar to all the sounds of the monastery church. Vespers trembled in the air before it and the roll of midnight complines. It felt the priest's voice strike against its surface when he sanctified the sacrifice ; the shuffle of the monks' feet as they took their places in the choir above, the echo of their coughs, the slamming of the doors were the familiar records of its life. In the redness of the morning, when the friars slept after their orisons, and the birds began to sing in the first light of dawn, it looked on the pavement of the church suffused with the wavering reflections of the painted windows, and watched the thin stains advance, as the day lengthened, and then recede in the weird pallor of the dying day. In the gloaming it watched the mysterious grey-ness sweep towards it and envelop it as in a shroud. All night long, as from a mirror, it gave back the red flame of the lamps that swung before it, and yet the words of the Prior seemed no nearer their fulfilment. *And the picture mourned.*

Then

Then it fell from its high estate to make place for some gilt stucco monstrosity placed there by a blundering prior, and was hung amidst the cobwebs of the duskiest corner of the monastery gateway.

II

The Fulfilment

Now there lived in Toro, in the reign of Philip II., a certain hidalgo—Don Juan Perez. Besides his possessions in the neighbouring country, he had amassed a large fortune as oidor of his native town. He and his wife had one son. They would that they had none—or more ! On this son they lavished all their love, and all their riches. None so handsome, none with so fine an air as he in Toro. When he came back to them, a young man of twenty fresh from the schools of Salamanca, the old people trembled with joy at the sight of him. It was true that they had paid his debts at cards, that they had condoned a thousand scandals, but they had put it down to the hot blood of youth—youth was ever thus—blood which would calm down and yet do honour to its honourable ancestry. The lad's conduct soon dispelled any such hopes. In a short time, it seemed to them as if he was possessed by a very devil. All Toro rang with his misdeeds—his midnight brawls, his drunken frolics. Don Juan and his wife looked at each other in anguish as one story after another reached their ears of dishonour and disgrace, of maidens seduced, and duels after some low tavern squabble over wine and cards. Each wondered which would succumb the first to the sorrow that was bringing them to the grave, and yet neither of them confessed to the other the cause. Their happiness fled. A shadow fell
over

over the house, which seemed to have been stricken by some appalling calamity. One day the son suddenly disappeared—none knew whither, except that he had fled—oh ! sacrilege of sacrilege !—with a professed nun, from the convent of the Clarisas. His gambling debts had well-nigh exhausted his father's coffers, but this time he had broken open his father's money chest, and made away with all of value he could find. This time, too, he had broken his mother's heart, and yet she died, tortured with an unextinguishable desire to see her scapegrace son once more. If a mother cannot condone her children's crimes, whatever they may be, who else shall do so ? When the old hidalgo looked on the dead face of the wife of his youth, stamped with so lasting an expression of pain that death itself was powerless to efface it—his soul burnt with a resentment almost as deep as the grief which bowed him to the earth.

When at the end of a few months, a ragged, travel-stained wayfarer reappeared at his father's house, the latter said nothing. Without a word, without a gesture, he accepted his son's presence at the board, as if he had never been away. A deep gulf yawned between the two which nothing could bridge. The son was too cynical to promise an amendment which he did not intend. When he had appeased his hunger, and exchanged his dirty raiments for those of a gentleman of his rank, he began his old course of dissipation and wickedness. The old hidalgo looked on and said nothing. He knew remonstrance was useless, but on his death-bed he called to him his son. They were the first words that had passed between them since the mother's death, and they were the last.

"I have," he said, "the misfortune to call you my son. Had your mother not been so holy as she was, I should have thought you had been devil's spawn. To all that you have left me, you
are

are heir. In that chest in the corner are my ready money, my bonds, mortgages and jewels. By my calculations they will last you just six months. It matters little to me whether you spend it all in one day or not, that is your business, not mine. I make myself no illusions. You broke your mother's heart, you have killed your father. I attempt no remonstrance, for, I know, it would take *another Christ to come down from the Cross to save such as you*. Still I gave you, when you were born, an old and honourable name and a proud lineage. To save these at all hazards from being tarnished further than they have already been, I give and bequeath to you this oak box. Swear to me that you will not open it until you are in the extremest necessity, until there is no help left to you from any living man. Nay, hardened as you are, false to the marrow of your bones as you are, you dare not break an oath sworn by the Body and Blood of Christ. Swear!" said the old man, "as you hope to be saved!"

"I neither wish nor hope to be saved," said the son, "but I will swear, and moreover, I will keep my oath. I will not open the box until there is no hope to me in Life but Death!"

The storm swept over mediæval Toro. The narrow street imprisoned amidst the stern grey houses, whose shadows had shut it in for centuries with their menacing presence and the mysterious records of their lives and crimes, was now a yellow turbulent torrent, washing against the palatial gateways. The wind howled and moaned with the sound of creaking woodwork, and eddied in gusts through the hollow gully, rather than a street, which separated the great, gaunt buildings. Through the thin rift, left by the almost meeting eaves, scarce a hand-breadth across, a flash of lightning, every now and then, broke through the lurid sky, and zigzagged for a moment across streaming façade and running water ;

water; followed by a gigantic and terrific peal or thunder which shook and rolled against the heavy masonry and then died away in faint repercussions in the distance. Then all was still except for the battering and tearing of the rain against the walls, as if it sought to gain an entry by force and permeate the very stones. In heavy sullen drops it dripped from knightly helmet and escutcheon with the monotony of a pendulum, or soaked into the soft films of moss and tufts of grass which filled the time-worn hollows of the sculptured granite.

The city was as one of the dead. It was no day for a Christian to be abroad. The beggars even had sought the shelter of a roof, and the very dogs—the half-starved curs that haunted the gutters for garbage all day long—lay cowering and silent in the shadow of some deep-mouthed gateway.

And on this unholy day, from one of the frowning palaces, a man emerged, his soul riven by a tempest as deep as that which raged around him. The great gates shut to with a clang that shook the street, and dominated for a moment the strife of the rain and the groaning wind. He might have been himself the spirit of the storm, this black figure, cloaked to the eyes, which brushed furtively against the houses, as if afraid to face the light of day. He turned back once to take a last look at the house he had left. That house which only a few hours before had been his until on the stroke of midnight he had played his last stake and lost. Even now he heard the slow clanging of the bells as they woke the silence of the street, the knell to him of ruin. He lived through every detail of the last hateful hours. One hope had remained to him. His father's box; that box he had sworn never to open until no remedy was left in life but death. The time had come. It could not be otherwise, but that the old man, foreseeing this final crisis, had saved for him the means to repair
his

his fortunes, and stored up in that little chest shut in by its triple locks of iron which bore the gilt escutcheon of his family, jewels, bonds, censos of great value, which might save him even now. As his footsteps resounded through the empty streets, and his sword, clinking against the pavement, roused hollow echoes, he had made plans for the future. He would amend his ways. He would marry. He would eschew gambling, drink, and women. He would have the masses said for his father's soul in the Monastery of Sto Tomé, even as the old man had charged him to have done in his will. He would dower a poor maiden in the Convent of the Clarisas. Let him have one more chance !

He knew that in that small chest lay the sentence of his Life or Death. Yet he opened it boldly, nor did his fingers tremble as they struggled with the intricacies of the triple lock, nor yet did any added pallor blanch his face when he threw back the lid and saw a rope, a new rope coiled neatly within the small compass of the box and tied into a noose, adjusted to the exact size of a man's neck !

The moonbeams trembled in at the narrow window. The lamp burnt red in the shadow of the vast space of the empty chamber. He wondered vaguely why the moon should be as bright and the lamp as red as yesterday. The old housekeeper was startled by his peals of laughter. He called for wine and she brought it. He held it up to the light, watched the moonbeams die in the bubbles and he thought it glistened like blood. He wondered if she saw the resemblance, and holding up the cup high above his head, he waved it in the air :

"To the memory of my father and of his most excellent jest," and then forced her to drink the toast. That was only a few hours ago.

Now he was hurrying headlong through the beating of the
tempest

tempest, and he pressed his arm against the rope lying nestled at his side as if to assure himself that it was still there. It was the last friend he had left ; his only friend ! With it he would seek——

“ Hell ! ” a voice seemed to ring through his brain. Juan Perez, brave as he was, felt a sudden chill.

The rain had penetrated the thick folds of his cloak and soaked into his doublet, and still he urged on, pursued by Fate. Whither ? That he knew not. Let Chance, the gambler's God, decide that. What he had got to do was to obey his father. The time had come, and no man can struggle against Fate, especially the Fate he himself has made. After all it was only an unlucky throw of the dice. He was even happy as he strode on, the gale singing in his ears ; happier he thought than he had been for years. He knew not—cared not where the deed was done. All he knew was that before night closed over Toro, there would be a dead body hanging somewhere that had once been a man. It was the simplest and best solution—the only one possible.

As he turned a corner, a gateway standing open arrested his attention. He entered and shook the raindrops from his hat. He had an excellent idea, almost as good, he thought, as his father's. He recognised the place as the locutory of the Augustinian Friars where he had often come with his mother as a boy—never since.

“ Strange that the old fools should leave the gates open on such a day as this ! ” he muttered.

He looked around. All was still. He smiled quietly. “ Why not here ? What a pleasure for the saintly hypocrites to-morrow morning to find a dead man's body hanging from their holy walls. Oh, my father ! you have been an excellent jester, but your son is almost as good.”

He

He looked for, and found, a nail in the whitewashed wall. He tried it. It was firm and strong, quite able to bear the weight of a man's body. He carefully attached the rope, and then examined the space below with a faint smile of irony, as if he sought to fix in his memory for ever the slightest detail of the breadth of line which would soon be covered by himself. Now that this matter was settled, there was no hurry, and he sat him down on the rough bench that lined the locutory—the bench made for beggars and suppliants and ruined men such as he. One thought gave him intense delight. "If my father was a good jester, I am as good!"

He sat himself down on the bench with his head between his hands pondering over many things. It would seem that all he had ever done, all the places he had ever seen, the faces he had kissed, those whom he had ruined or fought with and wounded, one or two he had killed, had joined together as if he must behold them—see them—be tortured by them in this moment. The oath of the man he had run his sword through rang through his brain. Tremulous hands seemed to clutch at him from space. The wind as it entered seemed to bring sighings, wailings, reproaches. He saw his mother's race, and he wondered how it was he had forgotten to visit her grave. Then he laughed inwardly at the scandal of the town to-morrow—he should not hear it—it would be no morrow to him, and at the clatter of tongues his death would arouse amongst the gossips of Toro. Death! Well, there hung Death! that rope dangling across the wall. A rope and a gurgle in the throat, that was Death. Nothing so terrible, after all, except to fools—not to men like him of blood and valour, who had faced and defied it every day for the last fifteen years of his life.

Then he rose, and with bended brows leant against the gatepost.

post. In vain the torrential storm swept over the cornfields and vineyards of Toro, obscuring them in mist. He had no need of eyes, for he knew every league of the country ; every undulation of the plain framed in the narrow space of the gate-posts was burnt on his brain. He could see them without eyes, and remember every familiar feature. He had ridden them in the hot sun, he had paced every weary step of them. He could have sworn that he still smelt the dust of it in his nostrils, and saw the magpie which had flown across the track when he returned to Toro after his mother's death. The innate egotism that lies in us all, making each one think himself the pivot of the world, arose within him in an intense revolt. That the sun should rise on the morrow and sparkle on the yellow cornfields, or that the morrow should again waken over them soaked in rain, as if he had never been, seemed to him unnatural, monstrous, incredible.

The pattering of the rain on the flagstones of the locutory, the moaning of the wind, formed a sort of symphony to his shapeless meditations. He turned from the door, and in the vacancy of his mood scanned the whitewashed walls. A few old pictures of saints—he recognised them as old acquaintances from the time he had come there with his mother ; they burnt themselves into his brain now. If there was some remembering faculty in man that lived after the extinction of the body, he felt that he should know them again through all Eternity. There was one picture, half hidden in a dusky corner almost under the beams, that roused his curiosity. It must have been placed there since—life still presented problems to solve. He rose and stood before it, shading his eyes. “A fine picture,” he muttered, “how in God's name has it got stranded here,” and he looked again—looked intensely. There was something in it that touched him as he had never been touched

touched since he was a boy. Why? Because he, too, was to suffer presently, by his own Free Will, something of the same torture which still writhed in the pale limbs, still seemed to quiver in the eyelids of the man before him. Something in the image fascinated and subdued him, seized, held him, bound him so that his feet were as if they had been riveted to the floor with lead. A great pity, a supreme tenderness for the other man who had also suffered, not as he was about to do, for his own sins, but for the sins of the world, thrilled through his soul with a spasm of pain. His mother's eyes seemed to shine down on him from the canvas, swept away the next moment as if by a swift river. She too had suffered for his sins. She had thought of him, the son who had killed her, even in her death throes. Perhaps if she had been alive, his death, if not his life, might have been different.

And then happened what no words, colours, or sounds can translate, for it seemed to him (it is the Chronicler who speaks) that the dusky corner grew full of a soft radiance which suffused itself out of and about the picture. It seemed to him too that he heard strains of melody, now faint, now louder, which must have come from the harps and psalteries of the angels, so far away, so strangely sweet it floated in the atmosphere about him. It seemed too as if the locutory was full of motion, as if invisible figures were passing to and fro in a glad joyousness. It was as if a gentle flapping, a noiseless beating of wings that fanned his brow and stirred his hair, accompanied that marvellous music. And as he still looked confounded, and as it translated, the figure in the picture became distinct and more distinct, grew larger and still larger until he could see neither frame nor picture, but only the gigantic figure of the crucified looming from a celestial light—and in the excessive radiance that enveloped him, he saw the

eyelids stir, the mouth open, and He, the Son of God, with outstretched arms was gazing on him with an ineffable smile.

For what Juan Perez had taken in his frenzy to be a lifeless picture was a living thing—with breath and motion! A living thing—a living man, but a man clothed with glory! A living man who, how he knew not, had left the Cross and was even then moving towards him with arms extended as if he would clasp him to his heart. Was he dreaming? Nay, he was not dreaming. For a touch as soft and noiseless as a flake of snow had fallen upon his shoulder—lingered there wistfully. Eyes looked into his that confounded his senses and bewildered his brain with their sweetness.

And he, Juan Perez, the lawless gambler returned their compassionate gaze, and as he did so, his soul melted.

He often wondered afterwards whether he had heard it in a dream, or if it was only the sougning of the wind, or a voice borne from Eternity, so faint, so diaphanous that uttered no sound, woke no responsive echo in his brain. It might have been the breath of the wind. It might have been the very breath of the Holy Ghost. "Juan," it seemed to say—and it might have been the breath of the wind—"Juan Perez, thou hast sinned greatly, but much shall be forgiven thee. Great is my love, deeper than a mother's. Be your sins scarlet, yet they shall be whiter than snow! Sin no more but live, even for My sake! I have waited for you—waited for years—for a century. You have come. Go! and sin no more!"

Fray Juan de la Misericordia de Dios is still remembered in the annals of the Monastery of Toro. Thrice was he prior, and when the Bishop of Salamanca preached his funeral sermon, he described him as a man sent from God, so great the consolation
he

he had administered to souls, so boundless his compassion for the poor. It was in his time that the miracle-working picture was restored once more to its old place over the High Altar, and in any great and poignant distress, the inhabitants of Toro to this day betake themselves to the Good Christ of Fray Juan de la Misericordia de Dios.

The Question

By Stephen Phillips

FATHER, beneath the moonless night,
This heavy stillness without light,
There comes a thought which I must speak ;
Why is my body then so weak ?
Why do I falter in the race,
And flag behind this mighty pace ?
Why is my strength so quickly flown ?
And hark ! My mother sobs alone !

II

My son, when I was young and free,
When I was filled with sap and glee,
I squandered here and there my strength,
And to thy mother's arms at length
Weary I came, and over-tired ;
With fever all my bones were fired.
Therefore so soon thy strength is flown,
Therefore thy mother sobs alone.

Father,

III

Father, since in your weaker thought,
And in your languor I was wrought,
Put me away, as creatures are ;
I am infirm and full of care.
Feebly you brought me to the light ;
Then softly hide me out of sight.
Now sooner will my strength be flown,
Nor will my mother sob alone.

IV

My son, stir up the fire, and pass,
Quickly the comfortable glass !
The infirm and evil fly in vain
Is toiling up the window pane.
Fill up ! For life is so, nor sigh ;
We cannot run from destiny.
Then fire thy strength that's quickly flown,
Hark ! how thy mother sobs alone !



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Concerning Preciosity

By John M. Robertson

IT is permitted in these days to have doubts on all matters ; and as French critics (following the German) have set us the example of doubting the artistic infallibility of Molière, a Briton may make bold to confess to one more misgiving in regard to that great artist. It was in witnessing recently a performance of *Les Précieuses Ridicules* at the Théâtre Français that there forced itself upon me, across the slight boredom of a third seeing, a new question as to the subject-matter of that classic farce. First it took shape as a certain wonderment at the brutality of the argument, still complacently followed twenty times a year by audiences for whom, in real life or modern drama, the classic exploit of the young seigneurs and their valets would have been an enormity, supposing anything on the same scale of feeling and taste to have been done or imagined in this generation. It distantly recalled the mediæval argument in *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the more serious scheme of masculine vengeance might be supposed to suggest to Shakspeare himself the reflection of Touchstone on some of the things devised as sport for ladies. It also recalled the recent episode of the killing of a French usher by a gang of young

young collegians who seized him in bed, bound him, and forced him to swallow a litre of rum, whereof he died. One cannot imagine that proceeding handled as a farce for the amusement of gentlemen in these days, even without the tragic finish. But there is a distinct savour of its spirit in the farce of Molière. What M. Stapfer gently avows of the satire in *Les Femmes Savantes* must be avowed here: "Let us confess it: this is not fine. Infatuation pushed to this degree and parading itself with this effrontery is too *invraisemblable*." And we accept M. Stapfer's untranslatable phrase: "Molière à le comique *insolent*." Evidently there is a gulf fixed—except in the theatre—between the taste of the seventeenth and that of the nineteenth century.

Of course we must allow for the fact that Molière was farcing, as he generally did, as the usages and atmosphere and "optic" of the theatre forced him to do. We need hardly look there, in any age, for life-size portraits and scrupulous colour. It is with the characters as with the actors' faces: they must needs be "made-up." But if we ought to make this allowance in our criticising of Molière, we ought also to make it in our estimating of the types *he* criticised. And this his complacent audiences have never done. In the matter of *les précieuses* they have always been unquestioningly on the side of the laughers, of the farce-maker, of the young seigneurs, of the valets; and even though the whole episode be consciously set by the onlooker in the Watteau-land of last-century comedy, there always subsists a distinct impression that the *préciosité* which Molière satirised was just some such imbecility as it appears in the talk of those poor preposterous provincial young ladies of the farce. That is evidently the impression left on the complacent reader as well as on the complacent theatre-goer. It is avowed in the literary histories. Some have noticed that by adding the term "*ridicules*" Molière implied that

that all *précieuses* were not ridiculous ; but the prevailing assumption is that what he showed up was the current preciosity. Yet the fact clearly could not have been so. Supposing any one to have ever talked the jargon we hear in the farce, it could not have been such types as these. It was not perked-up middle-class Audreys, gullible by valets, blunderingly bewraying themselves, who arrived at the fine frenzy of "*Voiturez-nous les commodités de la conversation.*" No ; preciosity was not quite what the judicious Molière supposed it to be ; and the *précieuses*—and this he must have known—were not at all what he represented them.* He had merely used the immemorial stratagem of satirising the practice by fictitiously degrading the practitioners. He convicted it of gross and vulgar absurdity by first masking them in gross and vulgar absurdity. As a matter of fact, preciosity is the last fault to which gross and vulgar absurdity can attain.

II

What then is it, in essence and origin ? We can take it from two points of view. Scientifically speaking, it is an attempt to deviate widely and wilfully, waywardly, from the normal forms of

* It may easily have happened that Molière had some drawing-room impertinences to avenge. "Born of the people," as M. Lanson remarks in his excellent history, "absent from Paris for twelve years, he had been aloof from the work carried on by the upper class society in regard to the language ; and when he returned, in 1658, he retained his free and firm style, nourished on archaisms, on Italian and Spanish locutions, popular or provincial metaphors and forms of phrase. . . ." At such a style fine folks would sneer ; and Molière might not unfairly seek some dramatic revenge.

phrase

viciously alongside of many good writers. What is the common element or symptom in all these cases ?

Clearly, as we said before, the explanation is never that of vulgar absurdity ; in all, we are dealing, it may be, with egoism, with unbalanced judgment, with juvenility of intelligence, with lopsidedness, with certain faults of character ; but in none with raw fatuity. Rather we are struck everywhere with a special sort of sensibility, a curious cleverness, an incapacity for commonplace—to say nothing of higher qualities in any one instance. Preciosity, in fact, is a misdirection of capacity, not at all a proof of incapacity for better things. And we have to look, finally, for the special conditions under which the misdirection tends most to take place. In terms of our previous conclusion, they will amount in general to some defect of regulative influence, some overbalance of the forces of individual self-will and literary sectarianism. Such defect and overbalance, it is easy to see, may arise either in a time of novelty and enterprise or in a time of dissolution, since in both there are likely to be movements of thought and fancy ill-related to the general development of judgment and knowledge. Of all the social forces which regulate the play of speech and literature, the healthiest are those of a vigorous all-round culture ; and an all-round culture is just what is lacking, in the terms of the case, alike in an epoch of decadence and in an epoch of novelty. Decadence means a lack of healthy relation among the social forces, an elevation or excessive enrichment of some elements and a degradation of others. In imperial Rome certain prior forms of intellectual and civic energy were absolutely interdicted : hence an overplus or overbalance in other forms, of which factitious literature was one. Energies repressed and regulated in one sphere could play lawlessly in another, where formerly the force of regulation had been a general discipline of common sense, now lacking.

lacking. The former rule of old and middle-age over youth was dissolved under a *régime* which put age and youth equally in tutelage; and the faults of youth, of which injudicious and overstrained style is one, would have a new freedom of scope. A factitious literature, an art for art's sake, would tend to flourish just as superstition flourished; only, inasmuch as bad intellectual conditions tend ultimately to kill literature altogether, that soon passed from morbid luxuriance to inanition, while superstition in the same soil grew from strength to strength.

The preciosity of the Renaissance, again, is also in large part a matter of the unrestrained exuberance of youth—in this case exercising itself one-sidedly in a new world of literature, living the life of words much more than the life of things and the knowledge of things. Not only the weak heads but the headstrong would tend to be turned by that intoxication. What ultimately came about, however, was the ripening of the general taste by the persistence of conditions of free strife, which nourish common sense and make the common interest in speech prevail over the perversities of pedants. The latinising Limousin student of Rabelais's caricature * suggests in the Rabelaisian manner what the actual latinists did. He speaks of Paris as the "inclyte et celebre academie que l'on vocite Lutece," and tells how "'nous transfretons la Sequane [= Seine] au dilucule et crepuscule; nous déambulons par les compites et quadrivies de l'urbe.' . . . A quoy, Pantagruel dist, 'Quel diable de langaige est cecy? Par Dieu, tu es quelque heretique'"—the spontaneous comment of the robust Philistine of all ages. "Segnor no, dist l'escolier, car libentissement des ce qu'il illucesce quelque minutule lesche du jour, . . . me irrorant de belle eau lustrale, grignotte d'un transon de

* Liv. ii. ch. 6.

de quelque missique precation de nos sacrificules. . . . Je revere des olympicoles. Je venere patricialement le supernel astripotens. Je dilige et redame mes proximes." After which Pantagrue comments again, "' Je croy qu'il nous forge ici quelque langaige diabolique et qu'il nous charme comme enchanteur.' A quoy dist un de ses gens : ' Seigneur, sans nulle doubte ce gallant veult contrefaire la langue des Parisiens, mais il ne fait que escorcher le latin, et cuide ainsi Pindariser ; et il lui semble bien qu'il est quelque grand orateur en françois, parce qu'il dedaigne l'usance commun de parler.' " And when Pantagrue, anticipating Molière, has proceeded to "escorcher" the offender, Rabelais tells how the latter after a few years died in a certain manner, "ce que faisant la vengeance divine, et nous demonstrant ce que dist le philosophe, et Aulu Gelle, qu'il nous convient parler selon le langaige usité, et, comme disoit Octavian Auguste, qu'il fault éviter les motz espaves, en pareille diligence que les patrons de navires evitent les rochers de la mer." It was Caius and not Octavian ; but no matter. Rabelais's own book, with its rich store of "motz usités" and "espaves," gave the French people a sufficiency of "langaige" to live by ; and the vainer pedantries passed, as they needs must, leaving their memory not only in Rabelais's caricature but, after all, in his own exuberant vocabulary,* as in that of Montaigne, whose French speech was inevitably enriched by that other which his father had made for him equally a mother tongue.

IV

A far subtler preciosity is that which we find flourishing as Euphuism in England under Elizabeth, and as a more grotesque
perversion

* This is duly noted by M. Lanson.

perversion of fancy in the later "metaphysical" poets down till the Restoration, and even after that. The development throughout is perfectly intelligible. In its beginnings, Euphuism is evidently for England the tumultuous awakening of a modern nation to the sense of the possession of a living and growing modern speech, such as had taken place in Italy some generations before, and in France but recently. In all three nations successively we see the same comparison of the new language with the dead tongues, the same claim to compete with the Greeks and Romans, even while imitating them. And Lyly represents once more the exuberance of youth and strength playing one-sidedly on a newly-gained world of words and books, unsoubered by experience and hard thinking. It is a world with more words than knowledge, with a vocabulary constantly widening itself from the stores of other tongues, and an imagination constantly kept on the stretch by the impact of other literatures. Artistic judgment could not quite keep pace with the accumulation of literature, even in the greatest brain of the time. For Shakspeare is not only euphuistic in his youth, even when bantering Euphuism; he retains to the last some of the daring exorbitance of speech which is the essential quality of Euphuism; only with the difference that the later style is strengthened by a background of past passion and vital experience, as well as chastened by intellectual discipline. Here beyond question preciosity can be seen to be a creative and liberating force, and far from a mere riot of incompetence. Even where the Elizabethan drama escapes the direct charge of preciosity, it is visibly warmed and tinted by that tropic neighbourhood; its very freedom of poetic phrase is made wider by the modish licence of the surrounding aristocratic world, in which Euphuism is as it were a many-coloured fashion of speech on a par with the parade of splendid costume.

costume. M. Taine has well seen, in the case of the Elizabethan Euphuism, what Molière has prevented us from seeing in the case of the later French preciosity, that it is the foppery of power and pride, not of folly.

“A new, strange, and overcharged style has been formed, and is to prevail until the Revolution, not only in poetry but also in prose, even in sermons and ceremonial addresses; a style so conformable to the spirit of the time that we meet it at the same period throughout Europe, in Ronsard and D'Aubigné, in Calderon, Gongora, and Marini. In 1580 appeared *Euphuës, the Anatomy of Wit*, by Lyly, which was the manual, the masterpiece, and the caricature of the new style, and which was received with a universal admiration. . . . The ladies knew by heart all the phrases of Euphuës, singular phrases, far-fetched and sophisticated, which are as enigmas for which the author seems determinedly to seek the least natural and the most remote expressions, full of exaggerations and antitheses, where mythological allusions, reminiscences of alchemy, metaphors from botany and astronomy, all the medley, all the pell-mell of erudition, travel, mannerism, rolls in a deluge of comparisons and conceits. Do not judge it from the grotesque painting made of it by Sir Walter Scott. His Sir Piercy Shafton is but a pedant, a cold and dry imitator; and it is warmth and originality that give to this language an accent and a living movement: it must be conceived not dead and inert, as we have it to-day in the old books, but springing from the lips of ladies and young lords in doublets brodered with pearls, vivified by their vibrating voices, their laughter, the light of their eyes, and the gesture of the hands that play with the hilt of the sword or twist the mantle of satin. . . . They amuse themselves as do to-day nervous and ardent artists in a studio. They do not speak to convince or comprehend, but to content their high-strung imagination. . . . They play with words, they twist and deform them, they cast up sudden perspectives, sharp contrasts, which leap out, stroke upon stroke, one after the other,

other, to infinity. They throw flower on flower, tinsel on tinsel; everything that glitters gives them pleasure; they gild and embroider and plume their language as they do their clothes. Of clearness, of order, of good sense, they have no thought; it is a festival and it is a riot: absurdity pleases them." *

Allowing for differences of time and culture and class, this holds more or less true of preciosity always. It is a wilful play of bias. In an age in which culture is mainly scholarly and imaginative, and science and criticism are only nascent, the tendency will go far to colour all literature; and, as innovation goes on in form with little or no deepening of thought, the licence of expression goes from bad to worse, poetry giving place to pedantry and technicality and verbal metaphysic, till the test of skill has come to be strangeness of expression, and polite literature in general is become a masquerade, remote from all actuality of feeling and conduct. This occurred in England during the seventeenth century, in which we pass from Shakspeare and Spenser to Donne and Cowley; and in which the admirable new art of the young Milton, a brain of supreme artistic faculty nourished on a long study of antiquity and vitalised by new and intense living interests, is still neighboured by the perfectly vicious art of the young Dryden, whose culture is so much slighter and whose interests are so much shallower, and whose first verses are masterpieces of bad taste. Milton shows us the long sway of the fantastic verbalist ideal in scattered phrases which partly mar his strong art—though not more than do some of his plunges into a crude simplicity, such as the famous "No fear lest dinner cool." The weaker Dryden shows it at his outset, in his complete acceptance of the fantastic ideal.

What

* *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, i. 276-279.

What had happened in the interval between Shakspeare and Milton was the diversion of the mass of mental energy from imaginative to ratiocinative literature, from questions of æsthetics and poetry to questions of life and conduct ; so that the drama passed to ineptitude in the hands of weak imitators, and poetry became essentially a pastime, though one pursued by some intelligences of remarkable eccentric power. The great work of Milton marks the reaction that might have been made under a continued Puritan *régime*, could that have escaped the freezing influence or judaising fanaticism in this any more than in the other arts ; the concrete literature of the Restoration and the next century was the reaction possible in the political circumstances. Dryden's early verses on the death of a young lord from the small-pox mark the limit of endurance. As M. Taine puts it, "the excess of folly in poetry, like the excess of injustice in politics, prepares and predicts revolutions." * And from the preciosity of literary specialists we pass rapidly to the language and the sentiment of the new man of the world, coloured only by the reminiscence of the preciosities of the past. Literature becomes the interest, if not of all, at least of all men and women of any education ; and language conforms of necessity to common sense and common thought. The reign of preciosity, which is wayward one-sidedness and strenuous limitation, is over. It may be that the new literary commonweal is relatively commonplace, charmless, and unsubtle in its speech and thinking ; but none the less it has the strength which comes of standing on Mother Earth. Its tongue is the tongue of a new philosophy, a new science, a new criticism, and a new prose fiction ; and in these exercises lies the gymnastic which will later redeem the new-fashioned poetry itself from the

new

new preciosity that is to overtake it when it in turn becomes but a pastime and a technique.

The common-sense literature of the "age of prose and reason" in England, however, represents not merely the reaction against the previous preciosity of extravagance; it connects with the movement of regulation in France, with the campaign of Molière and Boileau against the preciosity of their time—that which Molière burlesqued and degraded in his farce. Here we come to a preciosity that seems in a manner the contrary of that of the Euphuists, seeing that it is consciously rather a fastidious process of purification and limitation than one of audacious adventure in language. But the essential characteristic remains the same; it is still an innovation, a manifestation of egoism and cliqueism in taste; only the egoism is that of a very select and exclusive type, a taste which has passed through times of commotion, and calls with its unemployed nervous energy for elegance and finesse; the cliqueism is that of certain fastidious members and hangers-on of a formal and aristocratic court or upper four hundred. The new preciosity has the period of vigorous euphuism behind it, in the earlier energetic and expansive literature of Ronsard and Montaigne. In the euphuism of the sixteenth century the intellectual limitation or one-sidedness was that involved in a lop-sided culture, in a cultivation of language and fancy without a proportional knowledge of things or analysis of thinking. Limited on those sides, the mind played the more energetically and extravagantly in the phrasing of what ideas it had. In the Hotel Rambouillet the limiting principle is seen to be an ideal of *bon ton*. The new preciosity is thus indirect and fantastic with a difference. Seeking

to refine even on the habit of elaborate and artificial expression which had never ceased to prevail since the outburst of modern poetic literature in the previous century, it is not creative but restrictive, save in so far as the rejection of common speech involves a resort to the fantastic. It expresses, in fine, mainly the effort of a new upper class—formed since the close of the wars of religion—to make for itself a fitting literary atmosphere, free of the associations of the despised common life outside. It further partly represents, just as the expansive preciosity of the previous century had done, the influence of Italian models; the superior refinement of Italy being now as much felt by a class craving for elegance as the greater literateness of the south had been formerly felt by a generation thirsting for letters. And as seventeenth-century Italy represented above all things fanciful dilettantism, the native energy of Italian literature being destroyed, the French dilettantists could draw thence only a liminary inspiration. Thus, in so far as they swayed the new academy and the new literature, they undoubtedly impoverished the French language in point of colour and force, while giving it elegance and precision. But then, as we saw, the same thing was done in England later by the Restoration writers and the Popean school, who represented at once the reaction against Elizabethan and later preciosity and the final French reaction against the preciosity of the *salon*. The English reactionists were liminary in a less degree, because it chanced that England did not become aristocratised and royalised nearly so fully as France; and a constant upcrop of middle-class intelligence kept the language more robust and informal. Yet in England also, under the rule of a sophisticated common sense, as in Boileau's France under the same rule, there was limitation or the intellectual life, with the old result. Poetry and drama fell into, and for two generations adhered to, new stereotyped and
factitious

factitious forms, which again fostered preciosity of a kind, the preciosity of artificial and falsetto style. So much is there in common between an apparent contraction and an apparent expansion in human progress.

For, to come back to our starting-point, even the restrictive preciosity in both countries represented after all a play of intelligence, a new exercise of thought. In rejecting parts of the irregular vocabulary of the preceding age, it rejected also the vagueness of its thought and the frequent puerility of its fancy. Its own formative preciosity, arising by way of the exclusion of the common, was of course a new puerility: and when "*voiturez-nous les commodités de la conversation*," or anything near it, became a way of asking a servant to bring chairs, the preciosity of the *salon* had reached the point where common sense must needs protect and avenge itself, in the manner of Pantagruel if need be. After all, there may have been an obscure justice in Molière's mode of vengeance, suggesting as it did that this self-conscious torturing of a language was a fitter occupation for conceited and ignorant provincials than for noble ladies in a great capital. But the fact remains that Molière and Boileau, in their vindication of good sense against finikin absurdity, were really standing at the point of departure from which that absurdity had been reached. They stood in the main with Malherbe; and Malherbe's purism had been a judicious restrictive preciosity to begin with. The line of heredity is clear. All of the first generation of the French classicists, as M. Bourgoïn rightly insists, were touched with preciosity; and Corneille stands out not as rejecting it but as bringing it to bear on new notions, new themes, a new dramatic inspiration. And the best prose writers of the time before Pascal, as M. Brunetière again reminds us, were chronically precious in their elaborate indirectness and sophistication of phrasing.

Molière

Molière and Boileau, *bourgeois* both, though with a great difference in their culture, represented the wholesome intrusion, even in that undemocratic age, of the larger world, of the more general interest, on the mincing cliques of the court, who had now ceased to represent any fresh intellectual force ; and they were keeping the language sound, in its modern form, for the coming generations who were to use it to such manifold new purpose. But when we reflect that the language of Montesquieu and Voltaire and Rousseau remains substantially the sonorous and sinewy language of Bossuet and Pascal, and that that is the language as formed in an age of restrictive preciosity ; when further we recollect that the language restricted by the English writers of the Restoration and of the reign of Anne is substantially the language of Hume and Goldsmith and Sterne ; we are forced to recognise once more how far is Molière's vivacious farce from letting us see what preciosity originally and essentially is ; how far the thing is from being a mere vulgar silliness. It indeed needs the faculty of the Bossuets and Pascals, the Humes and Voltaires, the Sternes and Rousseaus, to save the corrected tongue from sinking to triviality ; and, once more, it is only by turning finally to the common good of national speech the results of their creative revolt that individual energy and the specialism of clique justify their audacious dealings with language.

But we see that such gain has accrued to the common stock or language from preciosity again and again ; and the knowledge should make us considerate, not only in our estimate of the preciosities of the past but in our reception of what looks like preciosity in the present. First, it may only be necessary neology. But even downright constructive preciosity, albeit it stands for self-will, or an excess of innovating zeal and of appetite for change, is not blank absurdity. It comes from the young, the headstrong, the

the self-absorbed, the revolutionary, the whimsical, the one-sided, the imperfectly developed ; but it never comes from mere fools—unless we are to fall back on the definition (which sometimes seems a truth) according to which fools in all ages have done a great deal for civilisation by their habit of preparing the way for the angels.

VI

It is not difficult to look with patience into the preciosities of the past, of which we have had the good and are now spared the vexation. But it is not so easy to be dispassionate before an energetic preciosity of our own day, when it is carried on by a writer whom we feel in a manner constrained to read, while recognising his preciosity for what it is. Hence many explosions of irritation over the preciosity of Carlyle, over that of Mr. Brown-ing, over that of Mr. Swinburne, and above all over that of Mr. Meredith. There may, however, be some little compensation to be had even now from the process of classifying these forms in relation to preciosity in general, especially as they all seem to be brief if not abortive variations, not destined to dominate periods. In each of the four cases mentioned, preciosity is simply an expression of the defiant idiosyncrasy of one man, which only to a slight extent creates a school or clique. Each one had been snapped at by the critics and disregarded by the public for his idiosyncrasy at the start ; and each one—here we come to the moral lesson—has persisted and worsened in his idiosyncrasy instead of correcting it. Carlyle reached his on two lines—partly by way of reproducing the manner of talk of his strong-headed and dogmatic old father, partly by way of imitating the declamatory French writers of his youth and of the previous age, as well as the German humoristic style which alone is usually specified

specified as having influenced him. The French influence on his style has apparently passed unnoticed ; but it will probably not be denied by those who will turn over the literature out of which he composed his *History of the French Revolution*. The essential thing is, however, that he constructed for himself a preciosity of a kind, a preciosity of dramatic manner, of dramatic pitch, of archaic style, of factitious concision, of Puritan colour, of "thees and thous," of prophetic airs and cynic humours. A few serious writers partly caught his manner—Mr. Forster and Mr. Masson, for instance ; and to some extent Kingsley and Dickens—but it says something for the independence of our age that despite the great reputation which Carlyle gradually attained, the manner never became a fashion. Even by those who admired the doctrine, it was generally recognised that such a manner could be sincere only at first hand. As for its indirect effects, we can say to-day, when it is recognisable as a preciosity of a sort, a display of wayward egoism in matters of language, that in its earlier phases it has no little artistic force, and that the sense of this has given later serious writers the courage to be more vari-coloured, more emotional, more individual in their writing than they otherwise would have been. Even such an unCarlylean book as Mill's *Liberty* probably owes something to Carlyle's example ; and perhaps Green's *Short History* owes no less, though neither exhibits any direct imitation whatever. On the other hand, the growing exaggeration of Carlyle's special preciosity with his years, showing as it did how far mere temperamental self-assertion was its motive, undoubtedly repelled part of the rising generation, and undermined his influence in advance. The "extraordinary arrogance" which Mr. Froude * confesses him to have shown in private had thus its Nemesis.

With

* *Life of Carlyle ; First Forty Years*, ii. 394.

With Mr. Browning the case is somewhat similar. His is the preciosity of a genius formed in semi-isolation, an original mind communing much with itself, and too little with vigorous and expert contemporary minds at the time when the friction of free comradeship has most disciplinary value. Such an elliptic style as his could not well have been formed at Oxford or Cambridge : even Carlyle did not write Carlylese till he went to dwell in the wilderness at Craigenputtock. Browning's style was substantially formed or hardened abroad, where the society of Mrs. Browning, herself magnetised by it and so on the way to a preciosity of her own, had no corrective influence. The poet in his prime was aloof from present-day English problems as well as from present-day English life ; his poems, whether written at home or abroad, deal for the most part with either foreign or unlocalised and ideal life ; and he finally impresses a reader as writing rather for himself than for any public. Public indifference and critical disrespect had for a time the effect of making him consciously antagonistic to his public—witness the apostrophes in *The Ring and the Book*—and in *Pacchiarotto* he has put on record how he felt towards some of his critics. His preciosity is thus that of an energetic, self-poised, self-absorbed, self-exiled artist, defiant of the general verdict even while obscurely craving it, and able to be so defiant by reason or financial independence ; and it followed the usual course of becoming exaggerated with age. It thus falls readily in its place as a form among others. And here as usual we can trace good indirect results, while, as in the case of Carlyle, the activity of modern criticism and the modern prevalence of the common interest in speech over egoisms and cliqueisms have prevented any direct contagion of the faults. While preparing for himself the penalty of future neglect, as regards not a little of his over-abundant output, Browning has pushed contemporary English poetry towards

towards vivacity, towards variety, towards intellectuality, without setting up a Browning school even in the Browning Society. It is somewhat grievous to think of the coming neglect, after the preliminary contemporary penalty of indifference. But by such quasi-martyrdoms is progress made in the age of tolerance; and after all Browning found life abundantly sweet, and is sure of immortality for a score of things.

Of Mr. Swinburne, little need be said. His preciosity too is that of a marked idiosyncrasy of utterance—this time a superfoetation of phrase, a plethora of vocabulary. His vice of style, too, was hotly persisted in when the matter of his first volume was denounced; and a life of semi-seclusion, in uncritically sympathetic company, has excluded whatever chance there may be supposed to have been of a corrective action of normal literary intercourse or outside criticism. Thus, though we notice in his case the usual tendency of the press to pay tribute to the aging writer when his faults are no longer novel, Mr. Swinburne has partly outlived his early influence as well as the early antagonism to his work; and of him too it may be said that what was new and strong in his performance, his enlargement and special tillage of the field of rhythm, has counted for good in English poetry; while his preciosity, consisting in his tautology and his archaism, has been but slightly contagious. It was not really a new way of speaking, not really a widening of expression, so much as a congestion of it, a heaping up of words for lack of valid ideas; differing here from the other modern preciosities just mentioned, which visibly come of a sense of something special to say. Hence Mr. Swinburne has not been the main influence even in the return to archaism. The other archaistic poets of the day are so independently of his influence.

Contrasted with the exaggerated egoisms of such writers as Carlyle, Browning, and Mr. Swinburne, some recent styles that have

have been called precious are hardly perceptible as such. That of the late Mr. Pater, for instance, has been so blamed ; and probably some who so criticise it will contend that in his case the word is rightly applied, and that in the three other cases above discussed it is not. Carlyle and Browning and Mr. Swinburne, it may be said, are mannerists, not *précieux*. Mr. Pater's style, it may be said, is really precious. But this, I would answer, is a misconception arising from a one-sided idea of the nature of preciosity. There is no constant radical difference between mannerism and preciosity ; but a writer may be mannered without being precious. Normal speech is tolerant of mere manner ; it is either the apparent consciousness of a need to speak abnormally, or a self-absorption too complete to realise how far its utterance varies from the normal—it is one or other of these aberrations that constitutes preciosity. And it is finally true that on the one hand all special self-absorption, and on the other hand all anxiety to write in a noticeable and unusual way, tend in the direction of preciosity. Dickens's manner often approaches it ; and perhaps there is a faint suspicion of it even in the delicate concern of Thackeray to be exquisitely simple, to avoid Dickens's over-ambitious way. A certain unconsciousness is the last grace of a good style. And this being so, there may be just an occasional savour of preciosity in the extreme preoccupation of Mr. Pater with his. This had the surprising result of making him commit oversights which a less anxious craftsman could hardly have fallen into—for instance, his way of running a favourite epithet to death, as when he introduces the adjective "comely," in one or other secondary or metaphorical sense, some five or six times in a few dozen pages ; and the syntax of some of the more elaborate sentences in one of his last volumes gave openings to fault-finding. But Mr. Pater's style is in the main so fastidiously
unexaggerated,

unexaggerated, so guarded against all violence and all pedantry, that he must be finally cleared of the charge of either constructive or restrictive preciosity in his writing as a whole. He sought excellence in style, not singularity or self-indulgence. He was really an admirable workman in whom the need for utterance, the burden and impulse of ideas, though not small, were apt to fall short of his exceptional craving for beauty of statement.

VII

Whatever dispute there may be over the foregoing criticisms there can be none, I think, over the judgment that Mr. Meredith's style is the most pronounced outbreak of preciosity in modern English literature. There, if ever, we may allow ourselves a quasi-Pantagruelian protest. It is indeed impossible for a reader who respects Mr. Meredith's genius to read him—or at least his later works—without irritation at his extraordinary ill-usage or language. Old admirers, going back to his earlier works, never free from the sin of preciosity, recognise that there has been an almost continuous deterioration—the fatal law of all purposive preciosity. In the earlier novels there were at times signal beauties of phrase, sentences in which the strain towards utterance was transmuted into fire and radiance, sentences of the fine poet who underlay and even now underlies that ever-thickening crust of preciosity and verbal affectation. Even in *One of Our Conquerors* there seemed, to the tolerant sense, to be still some gleams of the old flame, flashing at long intervals through the scoræ or unsmelted speech. But in *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* neither patience nor despair can discover in whole chapters aught but the lava and cinders of language. In mere tortuosity the writing is
not

not worse ; it could not well be ; but now, after the first few chapters, one has given up hope, and instead of desperately construing endless paragraphs of gritty perversity one lightly skips every mound in the path, content to follow the movement of a striking story behind a style that in itself has become a mere affliction. With the exception of Zola's *La Terre*—hard reading for a different reason—*One of Our Conquerors* was the hardest novel to read that I ever met with ; but I have found *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* easy enough. After a few chapters I no longer sought to read Mr. Meredith. I made a hand-to-mouth *précis* of nearly every page, and soon got over the ground, only pausing at times to reassure myself that all was ill.

Hardly once, so far as I have read, do we find an important sentence really well written ; never a paragraph ; for the perpetual grimace of expression, twisting the face of speech into every shape but those of beauty and repose, is in no sense admirable. Simple statements, normal reflections, are packed into the semblance of inspired fancies and brilliant aphorisms. As thus :

“That great couchant dragon of the devouring jaws and the withering breath, known as our London world, was in expectation of an excitement above yawns on the subject of a beautiful Lady Doubtful proposing herself, through a group of infatuated influential friends, to a decorous Court, as one among the ladies acceptable. The popular version of it sharpened the sauce by mingling romance and cynicism very happily ; for the numerous cooks, when out of the kitchen, will furnish a piquant dish.”

The violent metaphor, thrust into the fore-front of the sentence to impress us in advance, remains a grinning mask which moves no more ; the dragon becomes “the numerous cooks.” And the satire baulks no less than the poetry ; for when society's problems are

are thus admittedly contemptible, what becomes of the satirist's story based upon one of them? A few paragraphs further on we set out similarly with "the livid cloud-bank over a flowery field," which at once lapses to "the terrible aggregate social woman . . . *a mark of civilisation on to which our society must hold.*" It is after a grievous tirade of this sort that we have the avowal: "The vexatious thing in speaking of her is, that she compels to the use of the rhetorician's brass instrument." Well, we have really heard no note concerning her that does not belong to Mr. Meredith's own orchestra; and yet when we attempt, as we are so often moved to do, a translation of the passage into sane English, it is hardly possible to save it from the air of platitude. So little security does strangeness of style give for freshness of thought.

The case is past arguing. Short of the systematic counterfeiting of the Limousin student, nearly every element that men have agreed to vituperate in preciosity is found in this insupportable idiom. And all the while we recognise it as the writing of an artist of unusual insight and originality; a novelist, if not of the very first rank, yet so powerful and so independent that to apply to him the term second-rate is not allowable. He must be classed by himself, as a master with not worse liminary prejudices than those of Balzac; with more poetic elevation than any novelist of his day; a true modern in many things, despite a fundamental unrealism in his characters and an almost puerile proclivity to old-world devices of circumstantial plot. How, then, is the egregious vice of style to be accounted for?

Why, by one or other of the antecedents which we have seen to be involved in all preciosity; and as there is and can be no Meredithian school or clique, we go at once to the solution of individual self-will, defiance of censure, persistence in eccentricity, and self-absorption in isolation. It is all sequent. His first novels,

novels, with their already eccentric style, were given to a generation unable in the main to appreciate the originality and importance of their problems and the subtlety of their treatment; and the denunciations of dull critic snettled him. In a letter to the late James Thomson, published some years ago, he spoke with due causticity of the usual spectacle of the author hailed up, with his hands tied behind his back, before the self-elected and enthroned critic, who tries and scourges him for the offence of writing his own book in his own way. Contemning those who contemned him, Mr. Meredith persisted in being cryptic, eccentric, fantastic, elliptic. As if it were not enough to be artistically too subtle for his generation, he must needs persist in being gratuitously difficult and repellent as a writer, perverting a fine faculty to the bad ambition of being extraordinary, nay, to that of seeming superior. The prompt appreciation of the few good readers did not teach him to look on the reading-public as what it is, a loose mass of ever-varying units, in which even the dullards have no solidarity: he entrenched himself in the Carlylean and Browningsque manner, personifying the multitude as one lumpish hostile entity, or organised body of similar entities. Thus when, after an interval of silence, he produced the *Egoist*, and the accumulating units of the new generation, the newer minds, appreciated the novelty of the problem and the solution so generally as to make the book the success of its year, he was understood to be cynical over the praise given to a work which was in his opinion inferior to its predecessors. The new generation has since proceeded to read those earlier works; but Mr. Meredith had fixed his psychological habits, and no sense of community with his generation could now avail to make him treat language as a common possession, which any one may rightly improve, but which no one may fitly seek to turn into impenetrable

trable jungle for his own pleasure. Ill health may have had something to do with Mr. Meredith's æsthetic deviation from "the general deed of man"; and his contemporaries have their share of responsibility; but we must recognise in him what we have recognised behind all forms of preciosity—a specific limitation or one-sidedness, a failure to develop equably and in healthy relation to all the forces of the intellectual life. It cannot indeed be said of him that he has not grown. In his last book, despite the visible survival, in part, of the commonplace Jingoism of which he gave such surprising evidence in some violent verses eight or ten years ago, he has touched a position that is much better; and he has ventured on one solution of a sex problem which in former years he shunned. But the very lateness of these advances is a proof that he lost much by his isolation. Lesser people had got as far long ago. It has been recently told of him that he now reads in few books save the Bible and a few Greek classics—a regimen which would ill nourish even smaller minds. What he long ago confessed of himself in *Beauchamp's Career*—that he had acquired the habit of listening too much to his own voice—is now too obvious to need confessing. It all goes to produce, not only that defect of relation to current life which we see in his unhappy style, but that further defect which consists in his lapses into unreality as a novelist. For many of us there is such unreality in those devices of plot complication to which he so inveterately clings, and which so vexatiously trip up at once our illusion and our sense of his insight into the dynamic forces of character. A recent illustration is the episode of the concealment of Weyburn and Aminta in the wayside inn while their pursuers ride past—an episode which belongs to the art of Fielding and Smollett. While, however, some readers may still see no harm in these venerable expedients, every reader who knows enough to be
entitled

entitled to form a judgment must be startled by the amazing episode of the swimming-encounter of Weyburn and Aminta when the former is on his way to the Continent. That is the imagination of a man who either never knew what swimming is or has forgotten what he knew. The occurrence, as related in the novel, is an impossible dream. Mr. Meredith may be in touch with the developments of fencing—an old hobby of his—but his conception of what people do or can do in the water is pure fantasy. In this, indeed, there is pathos; and perhaps the ideal reader would see only pathos—or literary picturesque—in the kindred aberration of the novelist's prose. But when writers are still so imperfect, there can be few perfect readers.

We end by deploring, as contemporary criticism always must, a particular case of excessive preciosity, after setting out to find the soul of goodness in the thing in general. As it was in bygone instances that we could best see the element of compensation, the saving grace, it may be that the difficulty in seeing it in contemporary cases, and above all in Mr. Meredith's, is one which will lessen for posterity; though it is hard to believe that posterity, with its ever enlarging library, will have the time to ponder all of that tormented prose, supposing it to have the patience. A mis-giving arises as to whether much of Mr. Meredith must not inevitably go the way of Donne. But whether or not, his case clinches for us the lesson that is to be learned from more ancient instances; and that lesson may be summed up as consisting or ending in a new view of the meaning of democracy. It is in the democratic age that we seem to find, after all, at once the freest scope for individual literary idiosyncrasy and the least amount of harmful contagion from it—the maximum of the individual freedom compatible with a minimum of the harm. It would

thus seem that language, at least, is becoming effectively socialised. And here, let us hope, lies the security against that mild form of the malady of preciosity which is apt to follow the wide diffusion of an imperfect culture. The preciosity of democratic half-culture, in an age of knowledge, is at the worst a much less extravagant thing than the preciosities of the upper-class culture of ages in which all culture was narrow. So that the so-called process of "levelling-down," here as in other matters, turns out to give the best securities for a general levelling-up.

Sir Dagonet's Quest

By F. B. Money-Coutts

KING MARK came riding, in great despite,
Seeking Sir Tristram to slay,
And chanced on a merry and courteous knight,
But knew him not for that jesting wight
Sir Dinadan, brave and gay.

II

As saddle to saddle they paced along,
Hoving afar they saw
Horses and knights in a gallant throng
Under the forest shaw.

III

Said Dinadan, "Lo ! by yon cloth of gold
Launcelot rides this way !"
And Mark, like a man that shakes with cold,
Said, "Launcelot here ? Then I cannot hold
Longer with you to-day !"

When

IV

When Dinadan spied he might scarce abide
For terror, he cried, "I see
Sir Launcelot's shield ! On a silver field
Three lions and lilies three !"

But he said it to shape a jest and jape,
That cowardly King to school ;
For lions and lilies emblazoned thrice
He wist full well were the new device
Of Dagonet, Arthur's fool.

VI

Now Mark had turned him about, to slip
Back, like a snake, for fear ;
But Dinadan rode to his fellowship,
Who made of him passing cheer.

VII

He told them his craft and all agreed ;
So Dagonet, armed to fight,
Adventured his spear and spurred at speed,
Crying, "Ho ! ye caitiff of Cornish breed !
Keep ye, ye craven knight !"

Now

VIII

Now out, now in, through thick and through thin,
Mark fled from that shield aghast ;
Through thick and through thin, with dindle and din,
Sir Dagonet followed fast !

IX

Then the knights chased after, with Ho ! and Yield !
And he ran like a rated hound ;
And the cry rose high and the laughter pealed,
Till wood and water and forest and field
Rang with the noise and sound !

The Runaway

By Marion Hepworth-Dixon

“ I AM sorry to say, Mrs. Reinhart, that your son is—a profligate.”

Mr. Knowler was visibly distressed in giving voice to the words, and, in order to hide his evident emotion, drew a faded silk handkerchief from the pocket of his lengthy frock-coat and blew his nose irritably, as he gazed somewhat foolishly over the top of the bandanna round the dingy office, and out on to the bare yellow-brick wall which faced the solitary window.

He was a small, narrow-chested little man with innocent blue eyes, and a shrill voice, a little man who had cultivated a certain abruptness of manner in order to give weight and authority to his otherwise unimposing personality. Not that Mr. Josiah Knowler's personality lacked impressiveness in the eyes of the woman now seated in front of him. A poor physiognomist at any time, Mrs. Reinhart saw in Mr. Josiah the very form and front of visible and determinating forces. Was he not the senior partner, forsooth, in the great firm of Knowler Brothers, piano-makers, and the actual recipient, some thirteen months back, of her horde of five and twenty pounds paid in exchange for the indentures promising her son

son lessons in piano-tuning? In the widow's eyes Mr. Knowler's pockets figuratively bulged with the sum of her small savings, a sum it had taken her well-nigh as many years to amass as it represented actual coin of the realm.

"He hasn't been to his work?" she queried evasively, as her eyes dwelt on Mr. Josiah's profile and on the meagre cheek made ruddy by the curious little red veins which spread, fibre-like, over the averted cheek-bone.

"Your son," said Mr. Josiah, turning to her and replacing his pocket-handkerchief with a superfluous flourish, "your son, Mrs. Reinhart, has attended on two occasions—or, to be absolutely correct, on three occasions—only during the last seven weeks."

The woman's voice faltered as she answered:

"Then you've not been paying 'im, sir?"

"Apprentices are paid at the end of their week's work—their full week's work," Mr. Knowler reminded her.

"He was to have four-and-six given 'im the first year, five-and-six the second——"

"For work done, Mrs. Reinhart, for work done."

Mr. Knowler had been fussily replacing a stray paper in his desk at the moment of speaking, and the sharp snap with which the little gentleman reclosed the lid made the reply seem, in a sense, final and unanswerable to Mrs. Reinhart.

In the vague labyrinth of her mind she dimly felt the logic of the master's attitude, while she at the same time cast about for some solution of the inexplicable problem presented by a new presentation of facts. A suspicion which she as yet dared not put into words forced itself upon her. Surely the thing she feared most in all the world could not be true? Yet there was the sovereign missed from the mantelpiece; the gold brooch—given her by her poor dead husband on their wedding-day—which she
had

had mislaid and could not put her hand upon. Was it conceivable that her son——

In the pause that followed Mrs. Reinhart heard the faint monotonous sound of repeated chords, chords indicating the tuning of a distant piano, from an opposite wing of the building, and then the gruff laughter of two or three workmen, apparently lifting some heavy object, in the asphalt court below the window.

Mr. Josiah Knowler fidgeted. He wished it to be understood that his time was valuable, and half rose from his seat as he made a mechanical movement in the direction of the office bell.

“He’s not been home for a fortnight ; he hasn’t earnt anything here—— Where did he get it from ?”

The ellipsis in Mrs. Reinhart’s speech made it in no wise unintelligible to her listener. He was accustomed to deal with the class from which Mrs. Reinhart sprang, and answered with a perfect appreciation of her meaning :

“Your son appears to have plenty of money to spend, my good woman.”

“I don’t know how he comes by it !” she ejaculated.

“He would appear to have resources,” ventured the senior partner.

“He hasn’t a farthing, sir. Not one. It’s just what I can earn, and that at the best is half a crown a day, by going out to sew at ladies’ houses. And then the work’s precarious ; there’s weeks and weeks when there’s nothing doing.”

“His companions appear to be—to be the least advisable for a lad,” suggested Mr. Knowler. “My brother and I have both personally represented——”

“Oh ! He never will have nothing said,” groaned the woman ; “he’s stubborn, he’s terrible stubborn.”

“He’s incorrigibly idle,” supplemented Mr. Josiah Knowler.

Mrs. Reinhart’s face twitched nervously as she half turned with
a shrinking

a shrinking movement and clasped the back of the chair she had been sitting on. Was it to be eternally and indefinitely the same story? Was hers to be that weary round of endeavour which meets only with disappointment and failure? It was impossible to forget that the boy had already run away from the electric light works, where he had earnt his eighteen shillings a week, or that he had been turned away for non-attendance at the musical instrument makers', she had got him into with her brother's influence, at Hounslow. And now that she had actually staked her last farthing at Messrs. Knowler Brothers, her efforts seemed as fruitless as heretofore.

Without, in the cheerless northern suburb in which she found herself in a few moments' time, there was little outward presage of the coming spring. Everywhere were the stain and soil of winter. April was already at hand, but soot hung on the skeleton tracery of the rare trees which overtopped the garden walls; only a bud, on some early flowering shrub, told of a world of green to come. Yet a wind blowing from out the west, and flapping its damp fingers in her tired face, seemed to speak of other and less sordid surroundings. The wind blew from out the west bringing its message from the sea, and with it the ever-recurring memory of the sailor husband who had been so loyal a companion to her in the brief years of their married life. Though a Swede, the elder Reinhart had suffered from exposure to the cold, a severe winter on the Atlantic helping to aggravate the chest complaint to which he succumbed at Greenwich Hospital. The end had been sudden, and it was hardly an hour before the final spasm that Mrs. Reinhart promised the dying man that their son should be spared like hardships.

Hardships! . . . the wet sea wind lifted the pale hair from the anæmic face and the dull eyes lighted as she thought of the
wide

wide sea's open highways. The life might be hard for those who do business in great waters, but it was not mere hardship, as she knew, which wore away body and soul. It was the smirch or big cities which dulled the wholesome buoyancy of the blood.

And instinctively Mrs. Reinhart felt for the foreign envelope she had received from Sweden the same morning, and which she had thrust into her pocket on starting out on her errand to Mr. Knowler. It was from her dead husband's mother, to whom she wrote regularly, but whose letter she had forgotten in her anxiety or the morning. She was glad of anything to distract her thoughts now, and tore it open in the street.

"Come, my daughter," the cramped foreign writing ran, "I am fast growing old and need younger eyes than mine about the farm. If you fear to cross the seas alone, my brother is plying between London and Gottenburg. You will find him at Mill-wall till Saturday. Delay no more, my child. Come when he sails. Ask only for the *Eidelweiss*, and he will bring you surely to me"

The offer was one that had been made many times, but that the widow had regularly refused on account of her determination to remain near her son.

"Had her presence availed anything?" she asked herself, as she turned down a neglected-looking street running eastward off the Hampstead Road, and climbed the mildewed steps of a squalid house, guarded by a somewhat forbidding row of rusty railings, which stood on the left-hand side of the way.

"Had either entreaty or remonstrance availed?" The reiteration of the thought was disheartening during the long hours or the afternoon as her work fell from her lap and her eye wandered to the rocking tree-tops, which now and again touched the blurred window pane. The room was directly under the roof, so that the
outside

outside message from the world came in gusts which shook the crazy bolts and fastenings. Presently she rose and loosed them, and pushing down the sash, braced herself to the wild air which somehow seemed to calm the harassing trend of her thoughts. In herself there was confusion, doubt, and misery, and, added to misery, a fearful misgiving she could not name. There was life and stir, in a sense hope, in that swaying world without. The vanishing mists, the larger horizons, the opening of unknown aerial spaces, all spoke of the expansion of external things. She could not put the thought into words, but it was God's open air, and spoke in some inexplicable way of life's larger and more wholesome purposes. It spoke of the virile satisfaction of accomplishment, of an existence in which endeavour is not fruitless, in which even a weary woman's output has some sort of reward. So she let the buoyant gusts sweep through the dingy little room, which it shook as autumn winds sway a rotting leaf. And here, too, was the sterility of autumn. Lifeless, empty and unreal, in the woman's eyes everything that had been born there was dead—all her ambition for her son, all her hopes of living with him in happy comradeship. The very round of effort which had kept her cribbed within those four walls seemed to show itself a vain thing. It had availed nothing. The boy for whom she had sacrificed her last sovereign would not work.

"Had she not been paying good money for an empty room this fortnight past?" she asked herself in comical anti-climax to her forerunning mood. Worse than that—the thought took the very salt and flavour out of life—he had not been to the manufactory for seven weeks.

II

It was with an effort that Mrs. Reinhart at length closed the window and took up the forgotten sewing which had slipped on to the floor. How behindhand she was ! A skirt had to be finished that night. Without a pause the long monotonous hours of the afternoon passed until it was time to rekindle the bit of fire and grope about for a candle-end.

The scrap of supper was soon eaten, and then, while the fragments still strewed the table, she found her gaze wandering round from one familiar object to another. It was strange how to-night the room—the scene of her last fourteen or fifteen years' labour—stood bared to the flickering eye of the solitary candle. There was the little bed, with its faded grey shawl for a covering, on which she had tossed those years of lonely nights ; there, the faded velvet sofa, once the pride of the young married couple's parlour, on which she had lain weak, but ridiculously happy, in those long summer days following the birth of her child. Now, in the rare moments in which she threw herself upon the couch, it was when she returned at night, too faint and worn out to eat, after ten or eleven hours' sewing. There was little else in the room : nothing but the gamboge-coloured tin box, artlessly painted to simulate grained wood, which contained some poor clothing and the gimcrack rosewood whatnot, relic of the triumphs of early married gentility, and on which still stood a dusty ornament off a wedding-cake and a cheap desk, the receptacle of all her treasures. She had not opened it for a week or two, she remembered, and wondered what she had done with the key.

Of course. It was in the crock on the mantelpiece. And in a moment she was fitting it, with trembling fingers, into the lock.

What

What . . . what was this? The key did not turn. Like lightning the terrible thought seized her. The lock had been tampered with. Good God! *what she most feared, then, was true!* Sleeping on the same floor, her son had access to the room at all times. No one in the house would bar his entrance at any hour of the day when she was away at her work, and it was while she had been away at her work in distant parts of London that the mischief had certainly been wrought. The desk was broken open; her watch, the half-sovereign she had hidden in the little wash-leather case which held it, the locket containing the coloured portrait of her husband, her mother-in-law's old-fashioned Swedish ring, the half-dozen krone and two-krone pieces, all were gone!

No one but her son could have taken the things, for no one but her son knew where she hid the key of her room when she locked it up on going out for the day. It was in an inaccessible chink in the rotten boards of the passage which flanked her door, and was covered not only by a loose piece of the woodwork but by the mat she had placed there some years later to keep out the draughts of an exceptionally bitter winter. The boy, when a little fellow, had always insisted on hiding the key for her whenever they had to leave the house, and found it again with delighted chucklings on their return. Yes, certainly her son knew——

The thought almost choked her. The secret of the missing brooch, the missing sovereign, his long absence, all was made clear. She knew now that while he had money he would not work. Had he not run away from two excellent situations, one after another, when he was little more than eighteen? Had he not been recovered from some disreputable den the year after, when she was three weeks searching the town? Yes. . . . On each occasion, she recollected, in looking back, she had missed
money

money, though she had in no way suspected the thief at the time. It was, then, her earnings that he spent on the slouchers at tavern bars, on the riff-raff of both sexes that haunt street corners? There was no thrusting the miserable fact aside.

A convulsive shudder ran through her, the four walls of the little room which held her seemed to rock with a misery too great to put into words. All was dumb and confused as she sank on her knees on the floor, pressing her forehead against the hard rim of the wooden table. It was the only thing she was conscious of feeling physically for a time which might have been minutes or hours. The face of her son—flaccid, loose of lip, and shift of eye, as she had caught sight of it in the street some fortnight ago—held her like some hideous phantasm. The very oath with which he had repelled her seemed to reiterate in her ears.

Why had she been sent this scourge? She had toiled for twenty years for this son, but now, for the first time in her life, an extraordinary gulf appeared to open between them. What was it, and how had it been compassed? A numbness was creeping up from her very feet. A curious lassitude followed the tumult of half an hour before. It was over. That sensation at least was definite. It was all over. There was the feeling as if she had been frozen. Her pulse hardly beat at all.

An hour—two hours passed. Then the sudden flare and stench of the guttering candle recalled her to her surroundings and made her crawl to the window, where the yellow light from a street lamp gave a faint gleam from the pavement below. She did not trouble to find another candle, but sat crouched on the ground, listlessly hearing the other lodgers climb the steep stairs and one after another go to bed. Where was her son? Or did she any longer actually care? Soon after all was silent in the house, and, as the draught from the window made her shiver, she dragged

dragged the worn shawl which acted as coverlet over her shoulders, and threw herself, all dressed as she was, on the bed.

She did not know how long she had slept, when a familiar sound startled her. It was the well-known noise of shuffling feet on the landing outside, accompanied by a thick voice muttering somewhat superfluous imprecations to the four walls.

Mrs. Reinhart held her breath to listen. It was her son ! He had returned then ; his money must be spent. What if just to-night he should force his way in ? Surely that was his hand on the door handle ? She could feel nothing but the throb of her heart the following moments in her intense anxiety to catch the next sound. It came after what seemed a laggard interval. A shuffle, another exclamation, then the grating of a match, and while her heart stood still, a chink of light flashed, steadied itself, and then fell through the long crack in one of the upper panels of her door. It formed a streak in the darkness which cut a clean shaft of light across the room, and for nine or ten seconds illumined with a lurid ray the empty desk still open on the table.

The woman on the bed set her teeth. A grim expression passed into her eyes. No one had dreamed, and least of all herself, that there was any latent force in her. Yet the very shape and form of the open desk seemed visible to Mrs. Reinhart long after there was silence in her son's room, and when the phantom tap of the skeleton tree on the window and the dull moan of the wind in the chimney were the only sounds which reached her ears. It haunted her as the grey light of the dawning smote the rain-stained window, and when the sparrows' noisy chirrup advertised that the gruesome night was at an end.

It was the signal for her to slip on to her feet. Where was the letter from Sweden ? Yes ; a glance at it showed her that it was the day the boat sailed. She would keep it by her for reference.

“Ask

The Runaway

"Ask for the *Edelweiss*," it said, and she repeated the name in an unconscious whisper as she stole noiselessly to and fro in the room. It would be futile, she knew, to leave anything in writing. In the time to come the broken-open desk, the empty room would effectually tell their own tale. One or two things from the gamboge-coloured box, a pair of thick boots which she did not put on, this was all she needed. Her bonnet and shawl were on the chair.

A few minutes later, when the sun rose majestically above the horizon, the effulgent light of a radiant spring morning touched the spare figure of a woman who emerged with a bundle from one of the houses and cautiously put-to the door. The face was pale, the movements agitated, but once outside, she did not look back. Her eyes were set, and seemed to look eagerly eastward as she vanished down the deserted street.

It was close on noon before it was ascertained that Mrs. Reinhart had thus unostentatiously set out on a journey. By that time, as a matter of fact, the outward-bound bark *Edelweiss* had slipped her moorings and the widow had started for her new home.

Pierrot

By Olive Custance

PIERROT Pierrot at first they said you slept,
And then they told me you would never wake
I dared not think I watched the white day break,
The yellow lamps go out I have not wept.

But now I kiss your dear cold hands and weep ;
Shaken with sobs I cower beside the bed
At last I realise that you are dead
Drawn suddenly into the arms of sleep. . . .

Love ! . . . you will never look at me again
With those rain-coloured, heavy-lidded eyes,
Closed now for ever Pierrot, was it wise
To love so madly since we loved in vain ?

In vain ! in vain ! . . . but Pierrot, it was sweet
To stem the stealthy hours with wine and song ! . . .
Though death stood up between us stern and strong,
And fate twined nets to trip our dancing feet

. . . . Too soon, alas ! too soon our summer swooned
To bitter winter and against the lace
Of tossed white pillows lay a reckless face,
With feverish parched mouth like a red wound. . . .

Yet still was our brave love not overthrown,
And I would nestle at your side and see
Your large sad eyes grow passionate for me. . . .
Love ! wake and speak I cannot live alone. . . .

Blue as blue flame is the great sky above
The earth is wonderful and glad and green ;
But shut the sunlight out for I have seen
Forgetfulness upon the face of love.

Two Pictures

By Ethel Reed

I. An Introduction

II. A Vision





ETHEL REED

On the Toss of a Penny

By Cecil de Thierry

HE leant back among the fern, tired out with his day's tramp. Beside him rested his swag, too small and light for prosperity, and behind him his battered wideawake hat, which had fallen off when he threw himself down. All about him lay the mellow radiance of the setting sun.

He should have been pushing on to the township, whose square outlines peeped out from the trees in the hollow; but the rest was a luxury too tempting to be resisted. For the moment the drowsy silence of late afternoon, so soothing after the heat and dust of the many miles he had walked since early morning, lulled to sleep his most crying necessities. The spring of the fern, too, was as grateful to his tired limbs as the finest upholstered couch; and its scent he would not have exchanged for the most costly perfume in the world.

But presently the gnawing sensation of hunger began to assert itself again, and he slowly drew himself into a sitting position. Hard experience told him that, to get a meal, he must reach some habitation before nightfall. Later on he would be regarded with suspicion, and warned off as a thier.

But still he lingered. Perhaps it was the characteristic weakness of the man, or it may have been he was loth to cut short his dreams

dreams in the open to face the realities of the settlement. Rebuffs were as familiar to him as the sunshine. The prosperous farmer in the country and the sleek tradesman in the town, alike, showed him contempt. *They* had got on in the world, and so, if they were only honest and industrious, could any one else, he as much as read in their looks and words. *He* had not got on in the world, therefore it was impossible that he should be either.

A few paces from where he sat the road forked. One branch ended in the settlement, the other continued in a straight line to the gum field, for which he was bound. Indeed it was his uncertainty as to whether he should go on, or seek food and shelter for the night, that had induced him to halt.

With a curious expression of countenance and the movement of a child about to produce a treasure, secretly regarded with superstitious affection or awe, he drew from his breast a penny, very much dented, and with a hole in it, through which had been run a blue ribbon, now faded and creased almost beyond recognition. It was the only coin he possessed, and had it not been refused by every storekeeper in the district, would have been parted with long before.

"Which o' them shall it be?" he said aloud; and then a trifle bitterly, "so far as comfort goes, either. But let the copper say: the open, heads; yonder, tails."

Then, with the ease of practice, he spun it round and tossed, catching it deftly in his palm.

"Heads," he murmured, sighing; "I might 'a known it."

Twice he repeated the process, and each time the result was the same.

But he made no attempt to go. For another hour he sat in the sunshine, toying idly with the penny and whistling snatches of a bush ballad. Then he lumbered to his feet as if crippled by age
or

or rheumatism, put on his battered hat and, shouldering his swag, set briskly forward.

But, as he had done all his life, he took the easiest road. The omens had been in favour of the other, but indecision will learn neither from misfortune nor experience. However clearly destiny or duty indicated the path for him to follow, his weakness led him in a direction entirely opposite.

He had hardly proceeded a dozen yards when he was startled by hearing the loud report of a pistol and a smothered cry, sounds on the quiet afternoon air distinct to painfulness. Afraid without knowing why, he stood still and listened. But, before he could ascertain from whence they proceeded, a man sprang into the road in front of him and disappeared in the scrub.

Hastening his steps the swagger reached a ti-tree gate, from which a narrow path, bordered by rose-bushes and tall white lilies, led to a cottage embosomed in greenery. There he paused, overcome by a curious sense of loneliness he had never felt, even in the heart of the wilderness. But, in spite of a strong desire to flee from the spot, a stronger drew him towards the wide-open door, on the threshold of which he could see the outline of a man's form.

It was evidently the owner of the house. He lay on his back, clutching in one hand a white rose, which he must have caught when he fell. From a deep wound in his temple blood was still slowly trickling, and from his fixed and staring eyes horror and dread looked forth. At his feet lay a pistol, as if the murderer had flung it down in a hurry at the sound of an approaching footstep, and on the ground a well-filled purse, fastened by an elastic band. Beyond these details the swagger's gaze, now feverishly bright, saw nothing.

In a dim sort of way he understood that he and the dead were alone.

alone. But it stirred him less than the sight of the purse; on that his ideas were clear, though confined to the necessities of the moment. The young farmer, whose thrift had filled it, the shot of a murderer had sent beyond the need of it. But to him, hungry and penniless, the possession of it meant life itself. Not to take advantage of such a godsend was to deserve starvation or the worst treatment he might expect in the township. Robbery? Surely there could be no robbery in taking what was less than nothing to the dead! Like a true son of the wilderness he argued from the standpoint of his extremity, not from the higher ground or sentiment.

With a furtive glance on either side of him, he stooped down and stretched out his hand. But, before he could grasp the prize, the door of the house creaked on its hinges and closed with a bang. As if the trumpet of judgment had sounded in his ears, the man sprang to his feet, and, in a fit of guilty dread, rushed to the gate. But, in his eagerness, he fumbled at the latch without unfastening it. The check, slight as it was, sufficed to disarm his fears. But it was not until he stood in the open roadway, that he paused to reconnoitre. The wind, indeed, swept through the trees, but there was nothing else to alarm him. The silence of the hour, intensified by the silence of death, held the little garden.

Muttering a curse at his folly the swagger slowly retraced his steps to the body, whose eyes now looked up at him stonily. As if afraid delay might weaken his purpose, he stooped down for the second time, and, with averted head, hastily picked up the purse. But, in doing it, he exposed to view the underside, until then hidden. On it were three dark stains, which could only have been made by bloody fingers. From the light brown surface or the leather they stood out with that cruel insistence the imagination has grown to associate with human blood. As his eyes fell

on them, the swagger made a movement expressive of the most intense loathing, and the purse dropped to the ground with a thud and a clink. The body of the murdered man had only suggested to him a way of satisfying his hunger ; the discovery of a ghastly bit or evidence in connection with it filled him with horror. Situated as he was, perhaps, this was natural. The one he could leave behind and forget ; the other was a permanent record of the dead.

The sudden descent of the purse loosened its elastic band, which had only been tied in a knot, and part of its contents streamed out on the path. The sight of it quickened the swagger's faculties, if it did not entirely overcome his disgust. With a curious guttural exclamation of joy he gathered up all the silver, which had fallen out, and put it in his pocket. Then he stood still for a moment or two considering as to the wisdom of taking the purse also. But constitutional timidity rather than experience warned him of the danger he would run, and he, reluctantly, decided to leave it behind.

Foresight was a stranger to this man, whose vagrant blood had driven him as far as might be from the haunts of his kind, but, as he turned away, he was suddenly struck with an idea which closely resembled it. Reason and fastidiousness, too thoroughly ingrained to be lost by a rude contact with life, alike forbade him to take the purse just then. But what was to prevent him from putting it in a safe place so that it would be ready to serve his necessities on some future occasion ? The prospect stimulated him to energy ; but, though he traversed the garden from end to end, he could find no hiding-place both weather-proof and certain to elude the trained observation of the police. And then, as he was about to give up the search in despair, his eye fell on the wall, which ran parallel with the road. It was built of irregularly shaped

shaped stones, dug out of the volcanic soil of the farm, and piled one on top of the other without any cement. Near the gate they were small, except the two lower rows, which were unusually large. After carefully removing one of them, without disturbing those immediately above it, the swagger dug a hole with his fingers in the ground where it had lain. This done he went for the purse, shuddering at the blood stains as he picked it up, and dropped it in the hollow he had prepared for it ; afterwards putting the stone back in its place, and marking the spot with a stick.

Then, panic-stricken, he darted out of the gate, never once slackening his pace until he had put a good quarter of a mile between himself and the dead.

As he neared the town, houses became more and more frequent. He heard the laughter and shouts of merry children, and fragments of the conversation carried on at open windows, or on the creeper-entwined verandahs of the houses. But, like one half-asleep, he heard them as it were afar off. Tired and hungry he had but one thought—to satisfy his craving for food ; with a full pocket, a matter so simple that his face flushed and his blood flowed faster in his veins at the very thought.

When he had eaten he was another being. He was no longer a miserable creature, shrinking from observation like a whipped cur, but a man even as others are. He sat back in his chair at the public-house as if he had a spine—and what was more a spine in good order. He even tried to look the world about him in the face, but that was beyond his powers, so he gave it up. To exert himself, physically or mentally, just then was impossible. He was, so to speak, pervaded by a glow, though his sensations were those of an old gentleman after his second glass of port rather than those of a swagger, who has just eaten his first square meal for a week.

week. His brain moved sluggishly, his life in the open took shape as a vague memory.

Thus when he was arrested on the charge of murder, he showed so little surprise as to give an unfavourable impression to the police from the start. It was true he looked slightly bewildered, but no more than if he had been mistaken for an acquaintance by a stranger in the street. The peculiar sleepy sense of satisfaction, known only in its fulness to those whose meals are not so regular as they might be, dulled the force of the blow even more effectually than entire ignorance would have done. It was the animal, not the man, which was uppermost.

The police were perplexed. As a rule, criminals might be classed under either of two headings—the coarse and callous, or the refined and crushed. But this man belonged to neither. He would have embodied the popular idea of a mild country curate, but of a murderer, never. The worst that could be said of him related to his ragged, unkempt appearance. Of evil his countenance showed not a trace. Weak it was without a doubt, but weak with the weakness of childhood or age, rather than of youth or manhood. Therefore it was without a suspicion of craft, a confused pain looked out from the sunken blue eyes, and that was all.

During the succeeding weeks he awakened to a fuller sense of the gravity of his situation, but either he was indifferent to his own fate, or incapable of understanding that innocence might suffer for guilt ; for of all those concerned in the case he was the least anxious as to its progress. Lawyers argued and pleaded, remand after remand was asked for and obtained ; witnesses were examined and re-examined, but his demeanour never altered. He was more like a man in a trance than a man on trial for his life, and this the crowd, whose feelings had at first been excited
against

against him, at last came to see. The resentment, which had been expressed by fierce mutterings and black looks, died away ashamed before the forlornness of its object in the dock. Moreover the evidence was as far from solving the problem of his guilt at the end as it was in the beginning. He was a swagger, and had in his possession ten shillings in silver for which he could not, or would not account; beyond these two facts nothing could be proved against him. On the disappearance of the purse he could not be induced to say a word. The story he had told the evening of his arrest was never shaken in any one particular. Only that it had been found impossible to fasten the murder on any one else, the authorities would have been only too glad to let him go.

But at length a clue to the ownership of the pistol, thrown into the bushes under the window of the house, was discovered, and, as it could by no chance have come into the swagger's hands, there was no longer any reasonable excuse for detaining him a prisoner. He was, therefore, acquitted with the usual forms, a piece of good fortune it took him some time to realise thoroughly.

When he did at last grasp the fact, he was alone on the verandah of the court-house. But this was to him no source of anger and bitterness. He accepted it as he accepted every other ill of his lot—as a matter of course. Nothing else was to be expected when a swagger was under consideration. Besides, for the sake of appearances, none of the townspeople would care to be seen talking to one who had not been entirely cleared of the charge of murder. That it was less than their Christian profession demanded, they chose to forget: that it was more than convention could bear they had no difficulty in remembering.

Stay, there was an exception. As the swagger slouched up the
deserted

deserted street from the court-house he met a man—tall, loosely knit, and dressed in moleskin trousers and a striped shirt—who was lounging in the doorway of a public-house at the corner.

"Looky here," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "you'd better git out o' this."

"Yes," said the swagger, halting; "I was thinking about it."

The other made an impatient movement at this tame reply.

"Because that kind o' thing sticks to a bloomin' cuss as long as he lives—ye-es," he continued, and his heavy brows met in a fierce scowl. "I've bin there, an' I know. Now you git into shelter before night. See."

With that he flung a five-shilling piece into the road, and awkwardly retreated into the house.

The swagger picked it up with more alacrity than he commonly showed. But the acutest observation would have failed to discover in him the smallest sign of gratitude. Either he had lost the power to distinguish properly between kindness or unkindness, or he had got into the habit of meeting both with the same apathy of mien. Possibly, also, he was conscious that, under like circumstances, he would have done the same.

From habit he walked on without looking back, or he would have seen that he was followed by a man—a swagger like himself, but of evil countenance and rough appearance. As long as they were in the township, it was not noticeable, but, the further they left it behind, the more striking it became. The Shadow, however, instead of keeping to the road, hugged the hedges of the farms and the ti-tree of the open.

Instinctively the other proceeded in a direction opposite to that by which he had entered the town a month before. Lonely under the summer sun, it was desolate beyond description at this hour of the evening, and almost impassable, owing to the heavy

rain of the previous few days ; yet to him, after his narrow quarters in the prison, it was pleasant. Because of the personal discomfort he noticed the pools of water, into which he plunged, now and again, with a loud splash, and the heavy clay soil, in which he sank with a sucking sound at every step. But of the finer features of the landscape he saw nothing in detail. The sweet perfume of the ti-tree ; the ominous sighing of the wind ; the gray expanse of sky, over which dark masses of ragged-edged clouds were flying—these were not distinct parts of a magnificent picture, but a perfect whole, whose beauty he felt without attempting to analyse—perhaps the truest homage it is possible to pay.

When he reached a point in the road where it branched, still unconscious of the Shadow, he sat down. In front of him the ti-tree had been cleared, but already a new growth, two feet high, had sprung up in prodigal profusion, hiding the yellow earth beneath with a mantle of green. Across it a band of deep orange, left by the sun in the west, cast a weird shaft of light.

Suddenly, with the curious sound in his throat a horse makes when it is pleased, the swagger sank face downwards to the ground. Overcome by the necessity for expression, he hugged tufts of greenery passionately to his heart, and as heedless of the damp and spiky shoots as he was ignorant of the two evil blue eyes, curiously regarding him from an opening in the scrub, buried his head among it like a child on its mother's breast. When he lifted it again his eyes were full of tears.

Then, as if tired, he sat up again, and drew from his pocket the penny, tied with faded blue ribbon, with which he had tempted fate weeks before. Twirling it slowly between his thumbs, he fell to reasoning aloud.

"It's not much good," he said, "but better than nothing. Heads this way ; tails that way."

So

So saying he tossed. But the result was unsatisfactory. Twice tails were uppermost : once heads. To any one else the former would have decided the point, but to him, being the man he was, it was the latter.

Rising to his feet in the laboured fashion peculiar to his kind, he shouldered his swag, and at once struck into the road directly facing him—as before, followed by the Shadow. It was time, as he could see by the wrathful sky above him, and heard by the soughing of the ti-tree on either side. To increase the gloom rain began to fall, and, before he had gone a quarter of a mile, the short twilight of semi-tropical regions faded, and night fell.

Difficult as it was to proceed, he walked a mile before he paused to rest. Then, soaked to the skin and exhausted, he sought the shelter of a group of trees, standing near the edge of a field, and glanced about him to discover where he was, the Shadow halting not six paces distant. So far as he could judge he was no nearer a settlement than when he started, and could only suppose that, in the darkness, he had turned off the main road without being aware of it. What to do under the circumstances he had no idea. His long inactivity in the prison had enervated him to such an extent, that he was as unfitted for continuous walking as he was to stand the hardships of a night in the open. To go on was, therefore, out of the question ; to stay where he was not less so. Hence he was forced to think of finding shelter, however scanty.

To seek it at any of the farmhouses, whose lights twinkled here and there through the murky atmosphere, was out of the question. His appearance was now so well known in the district that the mere sight of him would not only chill sympathy in the kindest, but be the signal for an instant order to be off, or for
shutting

shutting the door in his face. Necessity is, however, seldom at a loss. He decided to continue on his way until he came to a homestead, built near the road, when he would try and creep into one of the outbuildings, and there lie down.

Fortified by this resolution he splashed forward with a trifle more energy, and had hardly proceeded a hundred yards when he was rewarded by hearing the swinging of a gate on its hinges. In another second a great shadow loomed up among the trees, in whose outlines he recognised the home of a settler. But there was no light in the windows, and, by the fitful gleams of a moon struggling with the inky blackness of the clouds hurrying across it, he saw that it was unoccupied. This was not a new experience, as, in the more lonely parts of the country, deserted homesteads are not unknown, so that he had no misgivings in taking possession of it for the night.

The house consisted of two rooms and a lean-to ; but, as he soon discovered by feeling along the walls with his hands, it was empty of furniture. He could, therefore, do nothing better than lie down in a corner furthest removed from the draught of the front door, which would not close, and get as much rest as he could before morning. At any rate the floor was dry, and there was a roof between him and the pitiless storm outside.

But sleep refused to come. In a vain endeavour to find ease for his tired body, he tossed from side to side, or shifted his position entirely, until even hunger and cold were forgotten in a sense of utter prostration. And then, in the subtle way peculiar to such things, he began to fancy he was not alone—to be aware of another presence beside his own in the house. Instantly he was sitting bolt upright, every nerve on the stretch, and the very flesh creeping on his bones. What was it? He could see nothing ; could hear no sound other than the howling of the wind,

wind, the sobbing of the rain, and the swish, swish of a branch as it was swept backward and forward against the roof.

At that instant the door swung forward with a bang, and the swagger, his hair almost on end, and perspiration dropping from every pore, sprang up with a loud shriek.

He knew where he was !

In that strange illumination of the mind, which neither depends on reason nor imagination, he remembered when he had last heard those same sounds, and the whole scene rushed before him with a vividness intensified by the hour and the place. Yet fascinated by the invisible, he stayed where he was, cowering in his corner like a wild beast in its lair. If he had only known it, within three paces of him stood the man who had followed him from the township !

For some minutes—which seemed to him hours, so full were they of a nameless dread—he gazed straight in front of him, when all at once a stream of moonlight struck obliquely across the room, taking shape to his excited fancy as a white-robed figure of giant proportions and unearthly form. But it disappeared almost directly, and all was in gloom again.

Half paralysed with fear, the swagger dragged himself along the floor to the door, which a gust of wind opened wide. He was thus able to crawl out into the air, and collect his scattered faculties. But the garden was as full of dread for him as the house. The rain had ceased, but the sobbing of the earth and the rush of the wind were, in his state of mind, fearsome things endowed with life. The moon, too, added to his terrors by casting strange and shifting shadows on the path, and investing the bushes and trees with terrible shapes. An equinoctial gale was blowing, and the place was alive with supernatural beings, yet the swagger was oppressed by its loneliness and silence.

In a panic he resolved to recover the purse he had hidden, and put as great a distance between himself and this accursed spot as it was possible to do before morning. He found the stick he had thrust into the ground to mark where it lay, and, as carefully as his terror would let him, drew out the stone. Had he turned round just then he would have seen the Shadow standing immediately behind him. But he was too absorbed in his task, and too much afraid to think of such a precaution. Hence the glittering eyes watched his every movement undisturbed. The moment he stood up, however, the Shadow shrank back into the yielding greenery of a passion-flower, which had taken possession of a young pine-tree. For a moment there was an awful pause. Then the swagger, forgetting his fears in a triumphant sense of his own foresight, held up the purse to the moonlight to be certain that he had it. Instantly the Shadow stretched forth a bony hand, and seized it, the three fingers of the right hand exactly fitting the three bloodstains on the leather. With a shriek, which echoed sadly through the garden, the swagger started back, and rushed blindly up the path to the house, falling across the threshold with a heavy thud.

And that was how the man, who had been accused of murdering the young farmer, came to be found in the self-same position on the doorstep as his supposed victim. A judgment said the settlers, but the doctor said it was heart-disease.

April of England

By A. Myron

(Written in South Africa)

APRIL of England,
Oh, for the breath of you,
Oh, for the light of you,
Oh, for the heart of you.
I am so far from you,
I am so far from you,
April of England.

Hearts for the light of you,
Hearts for the breath of you,
Die for the lack of you,
Die for the lack of the love and the kiss of you,
Die for the lack of the kiss and the love of you,
Kisses and love of you,
April of England,

At Old Italian Casements

By Dora Greenwell McChesney

From a Tuscan Window

A HIGH dark Florentine palace with frowning cornice and barred windows, rich torch-holders of wrought iron set beside the deep-arched doorway. In one of the casements stands a young girl ; it is early morning and the fresh light shines over her. She has been, perhaps, at a banquet, for she is in gala dress—soft green worked with threads of silver ; about her slim long throat is a chain with an ornament of enamel bright with shifting colours. She grasps the heavy iron with a small white hand and leans forward ; the shadow of one bar lies like a dark band across the bright hair drawn smoothly back from her forehead. She is watching for her lover to pass in the dusky street ; her lips are grave, but there is a smile in the brown eyes under the fine curved brows. She looks out through the sunrise and waits. Underneath the window, so close to the wall that he cannot be seen from above, lies a youth wrapped in a dark mantle—dead—he has been stabbed there in the night and fallen quite silently. His loose dark hair brushes the ground where he lies ; his blood has made a stain on the grey stones. His white face is turned up ; his eyes are open, looking towards the casement—the casement

ment where the maiden leans, watching for her lover to pass in the sunrise.

In the Palace of the Duke

THE window is wreathed about with strange carvings, where mocking faces look from among the vines. Against the broad sill a youth is leaning, looking into the court below where his horse is being led out and his falconer is waiting. The lad is dressed with great richness, his close crimson doublet and hose curiously slashed and his short cloak thick with golden embroidery. His dark hair makes a cloud about a delicate wilful face. In one hand he holds a casket of amber wrought with the loves of the gods, and before him on the ledge lie papers newly signed. Close by him are two figures ; a man still young and a stately woman whose hair is grey beneath her jewelled head-dress and veil. They are mother and son, for their features are alike, and wasted alike before the time by some long hunger of desire. She has her left hand on her bosom, pressed hard, almost as though on something hidden there ; with her right she holds a goblet of silver to the youth, who reaches backwards for it, not turning, with an indolent gesture. He glances carelessly to the court below, but the eyes of mother and son have met, unflinchingly, in a slow smile of terrible understanding.

A Venetian Balcony

NIGHT on the waters, yet no darkness. On the still lagoons broad sheen of moonlight ; in the canals and squares of Venice shifting and clashing lights of many lamps and torches,
for

for it is a night of festival. From a balcony set with discs of alabaster, purple and white, a woman is bending to look across the water. She is full in the mingling of lights, white of the moon-beams, gold of the wide-flaring torches; they shine on the warm whiteness of brow and throat and bosom and the gold of her hair which she wears coiled high, like a crown, about a jewelled dagger. She holds her mask in her left hand on which is no ring. There is a smile on her proud lips, but the great fire of her eyes is dying; into the triumph is stealing a touch of fear and the sense of a woman's first surrender. The night is all but gone, the revelry at its close. She looks across the water where the moon has made a silver track, but her eyes seek only the track of a gondola which has passed—slipped from her sight. Back in the dusk rich room a single silver lamp is burning; it throws a gleam on her own picture. A master hand has set her there as the holy Saint Catherine, robed like a queen, as indeed she is this night, but kneeling humbly before the Blessed Babe and holding a spousal ring.

A Brother of St. Francis

Low and narrow, the window of a convent cell, but it commands the width of Umbrian plain, above which the sun is scarcely risen. A great band of saffron light outlines the far horizon, but the full day has not come. Close to the walls of the cloister rise slender trees, shooting up as if athirst for the sun, their tall stems bare and straight, only breaking at the top into leafage. These lift a delicate tracery of green against the rose-grey of the sky, but, beyond, the lower slopes are dim with the ashen mist of the olives. And still beyond the plain sweeps out, showing no wood

or stream, making ready wide barren spaces to be touched into beauty by the changing sky. The sun has hardly given full life to the colours beneath; the green and yellow and grey merge tremulously. The virginal air of early dawn is not yet brushed away. The plain lies dream-like—rapt in a great expectancy. From the casement a young monk looks out. He wears the brown habit of a Franciscan. His eyes are wide and fixed and he looks into the sunrise and beyond it. His face is worn and very pale, so that the early light seems to shine through it, meeting a light from within; his lips are parted, not in prayer but in some breathless rapture of contemplation. The morning brightness searches his barren cell, touches his coarse garments and his clasped hands. The marks of fast and vigil are upon him. In his face is the fulness of utter renunciation—and the peace of a great promise. Outside, above the narrow window of his cell, the mated birds are building.

The Cardinal's Outlook

WIDE splendour of the sunset beating down upon Rome; the statues on column and church front stand aloof, and uplifted in the red glow the dark shafts of the cypresses are kindled by it into dusky gold. It shines in at the window where the Cardinal is sitting and dwells on his rich robes—then is subdued and lost in the room behind. Yet even there fugitive gleams respond to it, from rare enamel and wrought metal; most of all from the statuette of a Bacchante, the golden bronze of which seems to hold the sun-rays. The ivory crucifix looks wan beside it. The Cardinal does not see the sunset, though a bar of brightness lies across the book open before him on which his left hand

hand is pressed. The window is not all in light ; outside, against the pageant of the sky rises a mighty bulk of darkness. It is the dome of St. Peter's. Its shadow lies across the Cardinal's dwelling and across the world of his thought. And there—close to the base of that dome, there in the heart of the Vatican, the Pope is dying. The Cardinal, new come from his bedside, sits waiting : soon the last mystic sacraments must be bestowed, soon the last throb of life must pass. He waits. He does not see the sunset ; he sees instead the kneeling forms round the death-bed ; he sees the shrouded halls and solemn gatherings of the Conclave. He sees—beyond—a mystery of ever widening domination, at the centre of which is enthroned—not the old man who is dying yonder. Whose will it be—the solitary sovereign figure, soon to stand there where the dome rises and the great shadow lies ? The Cardinal's face has grown sharp and sunken in these hours ; it is of a pallor like the ivory crucifix behind him. Round his lips lingers the unchanging inward smile of priesthood. His eyes beneath their drooping lids are intent—patient—menacing. His right hand is a little lifted with an unconscious movement of benediction : with such a gesture it is that the Pope—from above the portico of the Lateran—blesses the kneeling multitudes.

Fine Feathers make Fine Birds

By A. Bauerle



The Rose

By Henry W. Nevins,

(A mediæval citizen speaks)

STEPHEN, clerk of Oxrord town,
Oh, the weary while he lies,
Wrapt in his old college gown,
Burning, burning till he dies !
And 'tis very surely said,
He shall burn when he is dead,
All aflame from foot to head.

Stephen said he knew a rose—
One and two, yea, roses three—
Lovelier far than any those
Which at service-time we see,
Emblems of atonement done,
And of Christ's beloved One,
And of Mary's mystic Son.

Stephen

The Rose

Stephen said his roses grew
All upon a milk-white stem,
Side by side together two,
One a little up from them,
Sweeter than the rose's breath,
Rosy as the sun riseth,
Warm beside ; that was his death.

Stephen swore, as God knows well,
Just to touch that topmost bud.
He would give his soul to hell—
Soul and body, bones and blood.
Hell has come before he dies ;
Burning, burning there he lies,
But he neither speaks nor cries.

Ah, what might those roses be ?
Once, before the dawn was red,
Did he wander out to see
If the rose were still a-bed ?
Did he find a rose-tree tall
Standing by the garden wall ?
Did he touch the rose of all ?

Stephen, was it worth the pain,
Just to touch a breathing rose ?
Ah, to think of it again,
Look, he smiles despite his throes.
Did he dream that hell would be
Years hereafter ? Now, you see,
Hell is here, and where is she ?

At my word, through all his face
Flames the infernal fire within,
Mary, Mary, grant me grace,
Still to keep my soul from sin !
 Thanks to God, my rose was grown
 Not so sweet, but all my own,
 Not so fair, but mine alone.

An Immortal

By Sidney Benson Thorp

THE dusky little row comprising No. 79 quivered like a jelly as railway or post-office vans, making a short cut between two principal thoroughfares, roared over the boulders of Wickham Road, N.W.

To the left front shone a public-house, another to the right. Before each an Italian musician had set up his rest (for it was ten o'clock and a fine, warm night), and thence, reckless of unhappy beings at the confluence, in friendly rivalry they teemed forth contradictory tunes. From a neighbouring street floated tepid air charged with the vibrations of inflated brass; the voices of the inhabitants, seeking on their doorsteps comparative cool at the close of a tropical day, fantastically varied the echoes. Linked bands of frolicsome youth patrolled beneath the window of No. 79, shouting a parody of Wagner wedded to words by an imitator of Mr. George R. Sims—the latest success of the halls. Splutters of gurgling laughter betrayed the whereabouts of amorous pairs.

And the man staring from the open window of the first-floor front neither saw nor heard.

Within the room a pale circle of light fell, from beneath the opaque shade of a single candle, directly upon a litter of manuscript and a few odd volumes of standard literature. The feeble rays reflected

reflected thence disclosed the furniture indispensable for man's dual existence : a narrow bed, from beneath which the rim of a bath protruded ; the table, and a couple of chairs. The walls were unadorned, the boards were bare.

The appearance of Henry Longton's volume had been the literary event of a season. The new man had been recognised as standing in a solitude unapproachable by the twittering mob of a prolific generation. A great poet, who chanced to be also himself a great critic, had dared to stake his reputation upon the future of the new Immortal. And so for a while he had lived in a hashish dream of exultation. He knew his achievements to be high ; and as he wandered by day or night through howling thoroughfares, lonely amid the turgid waves of half-evolved humanity, he forgot the cruel side of life, and hugged himself in the warm cloak of flattering memories : the tumult of the traffic sounded drums and trumpets to his song.

Importunate came the hour when he must set forth once more to produce. A royalty on a limited edition may mount to a handsome dole of pocket-money, but it is not a chartered company. Longton's small capital had long since melted away ; and he sat down, therefore, to write immortal verse for the liquidation of his landlady's bill.

The time had been when a mere act of attention sufficed to the erection of jewelled palaces from the piled-up treasures of his brain. Now, to his dismay, the most assiduous research could discover among the remnants nothing but the oft-rejected, the discoloured, and the flawed. The heavy wrath of the gods had fallen upon him, and he was dumb : he must betake himself to the merest hack-work of anonymous journalism ; and the bitterest drop in the cup of this set-back was the reflection that the tide was ebbing for one whom nature had framed unfit to profit by its flood.

flood. A poet and no man is a crushed worm endowed with understanding.

A tinkling hansom drew up at the door, and a moment after a well-dressed man came lightly up the stairs. He welcomed himself with a breezy confidence that suited well with his pleasant voice and handsome face, lighted all the candles he could find in his friend's store-cupboard and, finally, reclined upon the bed ; while his host, without any remonstrance against these revolutionary proceedings, hastened to produce a bottle, a couple of tumblers, and a half-empty box of his visitor's own cigars.

The brave shine of seventeen candles (ingeniously fastened to the mantelboard with a drop of their own wax) revealed a notable contrast between the friends, suggesting the not uncommon circumstance of an intimacy cemented by contrasting traits. The new comer was a man of extremely advantageous exterior ; his masculine beauty of a type that is familiar among Englishmen, but seldom so perfectly exemplified. Longton, on the other side, was contemptibly plain ; nor was his barbarous shapelessness of parts redeemed even by such ensign of superior intelligence as he might justly have claimed to distinguish him from the general man. His mean face was dingy with a three days' growth ; the opening of his coarse lips disclosed sparse fragments of discoloured teeth ; his eyes shone with a distressful expression of diffident self-esteem ; the greasy skin was unpleasantly diversified with patches of unwholesome red. His accustomed bearing was characterised by a deference that was servile without being humble ; but among the few with whom he was intimate he betrayed a self-assertive petulance which might not be confounded with courage. That Freddy Beaumont, in spite of these defects, had never ceased to revere and to befriend the solitary creature was the most amiable feature in his otherwise tolerably selfish and purposeless life.

“ And

"And what," he presently demanded, "might be the sense of this document?"—producing, as he spoke, a crumpled scrap.

"I wanted particularly to see you," replied the poet, who lisped disagreeably.

"So much I gathered : the appeal is in the name of the Deity."

"It was urgent."

"Very. I expected to find serpents coiling round the chairs and a fat toad squatting on the mantel-piece. It is nothing of that kind?"

"Nothing, nothing," replied the other in a tone of distressful impatience.

"Well?"

The poet strained his eyes helplessly up and around, with difficulty disjoined his sticky lips, wrung his clammy hands together, and at last, in an insecure voice and with a singular hesitancy, asked :

"Are you fond of pictures?"

"No," rejoined Freddy, placidly ; "but the first cousin of the wife of our gardener has a tame elephant."

"That is fortunate," answered Longton, suppressing with an effort the irritation which his friend's witticisms rarely failed to stir up. "Putting the elephant aside, however, for the moment—the fact is, I am in a difficulty."

"My dear fellow, why couldn't you say so at once? 'What's the demned total?'"

A van, the property of the Midland Railway Company, had made rapid approach, and the dialogue had risen in proportion on a swift crescendo. At this moment Freddy made as if he were clinging for his life to a buckler. When the turmoil had partially subsided——

"A cheque won't serve," replied the poet, shaking his head sadly.

"Anything in reason, you know, I am always ready to do for you," the other reassured him.

"This is easy," cried the poet, "and it is not unreasonable."

"Just tell me what it is you want," said Beaumont, "and you may depend on its being done."

"I am going to place my happiness in your hands."

"Snakes! What, a woman?"

Exerting himself once more to master his nerves, the other continued:

"Do you know the 'Madonna degli Ansidei'?"

"Never heard of the lady. Where's she on? But really this is very new—very new and unexpected!" And his face shaped itself to an appropriate but displeasing expression of masculine archness.

"The 'Madonna degli Ansidei,'" the other explained with laborious precision, though within the decayed slippers his toes were curled into a knot, "is a picture, painted some years ago by one Raphael Sanzio, an Italian gentleman, and at present housed in a public building which stands (for the greater convenience of exploring Londoners) within a stone's throw of the Alhambra and Empire Theatres. Do you think——"

"Right you are," responded Freddy, cheerily. "I don't know it—the picture—of course; but I suppose one of the official persons would condescend to point it out. What then?"

"You will find it in the third gallery; it faces the entrance; and the name is written beneath. You can read, I think you say?"

"Oh, shut up! Well, what am I to do? Annex the thing?"

"Precisely; if you can bring it away conveniently, without attracting attention."

"My dear chap——"

"Otherwise

"Otherwise I shall be satisfied if you will devote yourself, I won't say to admiring it, but to observing it closely for a quarter of an hour."

"And therewith, as by a miracle, the Philistine shall put off his skin and the barbarian wash away his spots; is that the hope? Now, I take this real kind of you, little boy; and it pains me to have to assure you that I am incorrigible: you'll have to put up with me as I am." And twisting up his lips, he joined his pipe to a passing choir:

"... mahnd 'aow ye ga-ow!

Nahnteen jolly good boys, all in a ra-ow."

There was a pause.

"From four o'clock to-morrow afternoon till a quarter past," resumed the petitioner, gazing fixedly past his guest.

Freddy's blue eyes opened childishly. "What the devil are you up to?" he demanded curiously.

"I have an engagement," stammered the poet. A flow of blood flushed his face and ebbed.

"You had better keep it, I suggest."

"I can't: don't you see?" he wailed, and threw out his hands with a gesture of despair.

"Why? Who's the party? I haven't a dream what you are driving at, I tell you."

"To meet—to meet—the Madonna," he replied desperately. "And you must represent me."

The excitement of the moment lent an unwonted rigidity to the crazy form, which to the young man's eyes, as he looked at him pitifully, seemed to render it yet more lamentable.

"My dear fellow," he remonstrated, "don't you think—seriously, you know—you had better knock it off for a bit—the
absinthe

absinthe or chloral or whatever it is? Now, give it up, there's a dear old chap. Look here," he added, laying a kind hand upon the other's shoulder, "get shaved and into some decent clothes, and come along to my chambers. I'll put you up for to-night, and to-morrow we'll run down to a little place I know on the coast : a week of it will make a new man of you."

The poet started up, a prodigy of wrath.

"Ass!" he exclaimed. "It is life and death, I tell you. You call yourself a friend; will you do this *nothing* for me? I ask you for the last time."

"No." The answer was given in a tone of quiet obstinacy which, seldom heard by Freddy's intimates, never failed to carry conviction. "I will go no such fool's errand," he added, "for any man. And now I must be off. Good-bye. I'll look round again in a day or two, and I hope I shall find a rational creature."

For a moment, while he held the handle, he faltered; the spectacle might have moved commiseration; but hardening his heart—

"It's too damned silly," he muttered, as he descended the steep stairs.

The poet heard him give a direction to the driver and presently the clatter of hoofs, as the hansom turned and tinkled away southwards.

• • • • •

Quarter after quarter chimed from the church of St. Pancras, and the solitary still sat crouching over the table. Involuntarily from the bitterness of present despair his mind strayed back into the past, and by an almost orderly survey reviewed the tissue of its web; picking out from it the gilded strands that here and there diversified the dun—the day when the long-sought publisher was found, the first handling of the precious volume, the article
in

in the *National* of which it furnished the subject. For a space he doted upon the brilliant imagination that had conceived these choice things and brought them forth. Then he was overwhelmed by the sense of present barrenness and of the defects that must in any case for ever link his days with solitude.

He rose and extinguished the candle-flare upon the mantelpiece, then from a worn despatch-box withdrew a faggot of letters. They dated over two years : the last from that very morning. He read each one through ; raised it devoutly for a moment to his quivering mouth ; and held it in the flame till it was consumed. The last ran :

“A strange idea of yours, my Poet—but what you tell me I shall do. To-morrow, then, I am to see the face I have searched a hundred crowds to find : for I should have known it, never doubt, if once chance had brought us near. Faces mirror minds : that never fails : and your mind, how well I know it ! I am not to speak, you say, and that is hard. Yet I am humble and submit. In this, as in all else, I am your glad handmaid.”

With glistening eyes he re-read the words ; then, with a groan, held this letter also in the flame. The fire spread along the edge and marched in a tremulous blue curve across the sheet, leaving charred ruin behind. He gently placed the unbroken tinder upon the table and allowed the flame to consume the corner by which he had held it. While he hesitated to mix these ashes with the rest, his eye lit upon the tumbler. He crushed the brittle remnant into the glass, pounding it with his fingers till it was mere dust. Upon this he poured the contents of a phial ; and having filled up the goblet from a carafe, stirred the contents with the end of a quill. He held the glass up towards the candle and watched the ashes circling and sinking in the yellow liquid.

“I have

"I have eaten ashes as it were bread," he murmured (as if to fulfil the magic), *"and have mingled my drink with weeping."*

He placed the draught upon the table, and kneeling at the low window-sill, looked out upon the road.

The clamour thence had grown louder as the hour drew near to midnight; the choruses more boisterous and less abject to the conventions of time and tune. Above the din of perpetual harsh chatter, on this side and that, rose shrill voices into the extreme register of denunciation and vituperative challenge, buoyed higher to each response by antiphonal remonstrance in a lower octave. A mingled line of young men and women, in various stages of incipient intoxication, wavered past, and beneath the window of No. 79, attained the honeyed climax of their song:

"She was one of the Early Birds,
And I was one o' the Worms."

The solitary lodger closed and bolted the window, and pulled the blind well down.

* * * * *

Upon Freddy's mind the last view of the unhappy young man had left an impression which he would gladly have shaken off. It would be too much, indeed, to assert that the memory chased sleep from his pillow, but it was a fact—and he noted it with surprise—that even eight hours of dreamless slumber proved impotent to efface it. By noon, though still resolved that friendship should exact no irrational concession from common sense, he began to be aware that his purpose was less strenuously set than at breakfast-time he had supposed it to be. The attempt to stiffen it ruined his lunch; the last effort to hold out diminished the value of his smoke; and by three o'clock he owned himself vanquished. He presently despatched a telegram to his
arbitrary

arbitrary friend and strolled down Piccadilly towards Trafalgar Square.

A little while he wandered, with a sense of reposeful well-being, through the wide rooms ; sharing their spaciousness with some half-score of travellers from the Continent or the States ; for it was the height of the season, and to lovers of art there was the Academy. Then, having found the Raphael of which he had come in search, with a little grimace he settled himself, as the clock of St. Martin's struck four, full facing it upon a chair.

Determined, now that he had gone so far, to fulfil to the uttermost his friend's eccentric request, he focussed his eyes resolutely upon the masterpiece. "I will absorb culture," he thought ; "it is good form." And he proceeded to concentrate his mind.

But, good as was his will, he found it impossible to stir up in himself any poignant interest ; nor could he help repining against the wayward taste of his friend, which had selected as the object of his study the inspired incongruities of this mediæval work, rather than a cheerful canvas representing an Epsom crowd, which had laid hold upon his imagination in one of the chambers devoted to the British and Modern Schools. Indeed, such was the tedium of this futile search after occult beauties that five minutes of the fifteen had barely sped before he was pressingly aware of a head in unstable equilibrium. The nod aroused him, and the next moment he was wide-awake.

From the gallery on his right hand as he sat, from behind a screen which masked the opening, fluttered the panting figure of a girl. Her slender shape sloped forward as if the little feet were clogs upon a buoyant soul ; her hands were pressed crosswise beneath her throat ; cloud fleeces of evening gold pursued one another across her forehead, her cheek, her neck, as she stood gazing with shining eyes upon his face, her dewy lips apart.

An

An older woman, her companion, emerged and drew her away.

"How sweet!" murmured the student. "Wonder who she can be?" And he arose.

* * * * *

It was almost midnight when Freddy drove into Wickham Road, swelling with great words, primed with confidences.

About the door of 79 it surprised him to find a loose semi circular crowd, radiating from the sheen of police-buttons. With some difficulty he made his way to the officer, and inquired of him the reason of the assemblage.

The constable eyed him deliberately, and answered with composure:

"Oh, ther's been a bit of a tragedy: lodger's done for 'i'sulf. They'll stop here all night, some of 'em."

And he spat wearily upon the pavement.

The Noon of Love

By J. A. Blaikie

EASTWARD each morning,
Ever old, ever new,
The radiant adorning
Of day made for you
Meets me, and lifts me, upspringing
Over crag, over hollow,
Over woodland and meadow,
A glory all heaven, the earth its sun-shadow—
I go with heart singing,
And singing winds follow,
I take my way winging,
Where the gossamers fly, to the sun's gold clinging,
My sweeting, my darling, my One !
Into the gold and the sun.

II

Unbreathing Noon, the hour of love's dominion,
Falls now, as yesterday, as 'twill to-morrow ;

Soft

Soft as the amorous dove's uplifted pinion,
Sweet as the fair first sleep of new-born sorrow.
There's not the least small stir on yonder wall
Of grass or fern ; hushed is the torrent's throat
Within the dark ravine, and in yon oak
The woodpecker his many-sounding stroke
Has stayed ; the windless air bears not one note
To vex the dreaming air this noontide fall.
But we, my love, sleep not, but wake to prove
The inconstant constancy o' the noon of love ;
My kingdom lost ! which once more I regain,
And then do lose with every evening's pain—
A conqueror who takes his spoil, yet yields
More than he wins of Love's ne'er-conquered fields—
Some unimagined treasure there must be
That I from you may draw, or you from me,
Some joy which we from envious time may wrest
That shall make droop the proud o'er-topping crest
Of yesterday ; and so the exhaustless store
Offers fresh marvels of love-lure and lore.
Thus ours full harvest is ; our noon of love
Nor afternoon nor aftermath may know,
With changeless change it does our spirits move
And of love's hours eternises the flow :
Better than best of what is past, O Day !
Until thou diest with thy last rose-ray,
Better than best until to-morrow shines
A-quivering through yon purple band of pines,
Ever the best, beneath noon's ripened skies,
O Spirit and Heart that me imparadise !

III

Westward each nightfall
When white lies the dew,
Where the stream makes a bright fall
Of moon-rays for you ;
While the night wind goes sighing
Over crag, over hollow,
Like a ghostly replying
To the snowy owl's crying,
I the white waters follow ;
With lips still sweet from sweet lips kist,
Like a spirit I pass
O'er the gleaming grass
Into the moon and the mist.

The Other Anna

By Evelyn Sharp

THERE were flights and flights of wide, cold, dreary stone stairs, and at the top of them three studios in a row. Pinned on the door of the furthest one was a notice to the effect that the owner had gone out to lunch and would not be back until two, and it was this that caused the discontent on the face of the girl who sat on the edge of the stairs, drumming her toes impatiently on the step below.

“And I promised to be here at half-past one,” she grumbled, shivering a little as she spoke; and she got up and paced the landing quickly, and stamped her feet to keep warm. A man opened the door of the middle studio with a jerk, and looked out.

“Are you waiting for anybody? Hadn’t you better go away and come again presently? Mr. Hallaford won’t be back for another half-hour,” he said, in short rapid sentences. There was a frown on his face, but whether it came from nervousness or annoyance she could not tell. It was evident, though, that she worried him by being there, for it was the second time he had spoken to her; and she gave her chin the slightest tilt into the air as she answered him.

“Go away? Down all those stairs? I couldn’t really!” she said with an irritating smile.

“Oh

"Oh well," began the man, frowning again, "if you like hanging about——"

"I don't like it a bit," she assured him, earnestly. "It is the stupidest occupation imaginable. You should just try it and see!"

But this he showed no anxiety to do, for the mere suggestion precipitated him into his studio again, and she concluded that the frown must have been nervousness after all. She returned to her seat on the stairs, but had hardly settled herself in her corner when the door opened behind her once more, and the owner of the middle studio was again jerking out his abrupt remarks at her back.

"It's no use staying out there in the cold," he said, as though she were somehow morally responsible for the inclemency of the weather. "There's a fire in here, and my model hasn't come back yet. You can come in and wait, if you like."

"All right; I don't mind if I do," she said carelessly, and followed him in. Common gratitude or even civility, she felt, would have been wasted on a man who threw his hospitality at her head; and it was only the unfriendliness of the stone stairs outside, and perhaps her desire for adventure as well, that made her accept his offer at all. But when he did not even trouble to give her a chair, and resumed his occupation of stretching a paper on a board without noticing her in the least, Anna began to feel puzzled as well as slighted. He was certainly odd, and she always liked odd people; he might be nervous into the bargain, and nervousness was a failing so far removed from her own personality that she was always inclined to tolerate it in another; but neither nerves nor eccentricity could quite explain his want of manners, and she had never had to endure discourtesy from a man before. She prepared resentfully to assert herself, but before she had time

to choose her words a sudden suspicion darted into her mind. This was a studio, and the owner of it was an artist, and he had found her hanging about another man's studio. How could he be supposed to know that she was only having her portrait painted, and was not a professional model at all? The idea, when she had once grasped it, amused her immensely; and she resolved impulsively to play the part he expected from her. The adventure was promising well, she thought.

"What fun!" she said aloud, and her host glanced up at her and frowned. Of course, she wanted him to frivoled with her, and he did not mean to be frivoled with. So he said nothing to encourage her, and she sat down and scanned the room critically. It was very bare, and rather dusty.

"I suppose it's because you're a man," she observed, suddenly. She was only finishing her thoughts out loud, but to him it sounded like another attempt to draw him into conversation, and he felt irritated by her persistence. He never wanted to talk much at any time, and his attitude towards the confidences of his models was one of absolute indifference. He did not care to know why they had become models, nor how their people had lost their money, nor what sort of homes they had; they were there to be drawn, that was all. But he realised vaguely that Anna was there by his invitation, and he made an effort to be civil.

"It accounts for most of my actions, yes," he said, and set down the board and began filling his pipe.

"I mean," she explained, "that if you were a woman you might make this place look awfully nice. You could have flowers, for instance, and——"

"Oh yes," he interrupted; "and photographs, and muslin, and screens."

"Well, you might," she said, calmly. "But I shouldn't.
Flowers

Flowers would be enough for me, and perhaps a broom and a duster. But then, I'm not a man."

"No," he said, just as calmly. "If you were, you would know that one does not take one's suggestions about these things from a woman."

Even in her assumed character she was not quite prepared for the scant courtesy of his reply, and he inferred from her silence that he had succeeded in quenching her at last. But when he glanced at her over his shoulder, he was rather disconcerted at finding her eyes fixed on his face with an astonished look in them. He was always absent-minded, and when he was not at work he was unobservant as well; and he asked himself doubtfully whether her cheeks had been quite so pink before he made his last remark. Any other man would have noticed long ago that she had not the manner or the air of the ordinary model; but Askett did not trouble to argue the point even for his own satisfaction. She was a little more ladylike than most of them, perhaps, but she resembled the rest of her class in wanting to chatter, and that in itself justified his abruptness. So there was a pause that was a little awkward, and then his model came in—an old man in a slouched hat and a worn brown coat.

"What a musty old subject to choose!" she commented, and got up instantly and walked away to the door.

"Wouldn't you care to wait until Hallaford comes back?" asked her host, a little less morosely. "I can go on working all the same, as long as you don't talk."

"I shouldn't think of it," she said, emphatically. "I am quite sure you wouldn't be able to endure another suggestion from me, and I really couldn't promise not to make one."

He could have sworn that her last words were accompanied by a lightning glance round the room, but her expression, when she turned

turned at the door and looked at him, was almost vacant in its innocence. He followed her hastily, and opened the door for her.

"You'd better wait," he said, involuntarily. "You'll catch cold or something out there."

She flashed a mocking look up in his face.

"Don't you think," she observed, demurely, "that that is one of the things about which one does not want suggestions from a man?"

Ten minutes later, she was accepting a torrent of apologies from Tom Hallaford with a queenly forgiveness that she knew by experience to be the most effective weapon at her command.

"If you weren't such an awful brick you'd never sit to me again," he avowed, humbly. "To drag you all this way, and then——! Wasn't it beastly cold too?"

"It was cold," Anna admitted, gently. "But I didn't mind much."

And when he began afresh to abase himself, and made the confusing statement that he ought to be shot and was hanged, she felt he had suffered sufficiently, and she interrupted him by a true account of how she had spent the last half-hour.

"Well, I'm bothered!" he said. "Of course, Askett thought you were a model, a *paid* model, don't you see; and he thought it was just cheek of you to say his studio was dirty and all that. So it would have been rather, don't you know, if you'd been an ordinary model; they want jumping on sometimes. I say, Miss Angell," he added, chuckling, "what larks if Askett comes in when you've gone, and asks me for your address! Ten to one he does. What shall I say?"

"I don't fancy," said Anna, quietly, "that he will want to know."

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, as she was hurrying past the door of the middle studio, two hours later, Askett came out hastily and called her back.

"Is all your time filled up for the present?" he asked, "or could you sit to me next week, in the afternoons?"

A gleam of mischief lurked in her eyes, but he was still unsuspecting, and he mistook her hesitation for reflection.

"I could come next week," she said. "What time?"

"Two o'clock on Monday. And you can give me your name and address so that I shall know where to write to you. You'll very likely forget all about it."

"Do you really think that's possible?" smiled Anna. Askett said nothing, but looked over her head at the wall as though she were not there at all, and waited for her to reply. Anna was racking her brains for a name that would be likely to belong to a model.

"Well?" he said, impatiently.

"Oh, you want my name?" said Anna, desperately. "Well, my address is care of Miss Anna Angell, 25 Beaconsfield Mansions, Belgravia. And my name is—is Poppy—Poppy Wilson. Oh dear! that's wrong—I mean——"

He was staring at her, for the first time, with something approaching ordinary human interest.

"There seems to be a difficulty about the name," he remarked. He was not surprised at all; she had probably quarrelled with her family—models always had—and so was afraid to give her real name. He put down her confusion to the fact that she had not been sitting long, and was new at the deception. "What's the matter with Wilson?" he asked, not unkindly. "It's a very nice name, isn't it?"

"Oh, Wilson's all right," she hastened to assure him. "It's
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the Poppy that's wrong ; I mean, it's my pet name, don't you see, and it wouldn't do."

"No," he said, dryly. "Perhaps it wouldn't."

"My real name is Anna," she continued, "Anna Wilson. You understand, don't you ?" Even for the sake of the disguise, she could not endure that he should think of her as Poppy.

"Real name Anna, pet name Poppy, address care of Miss Anna—hullo ?" he stopped writing on his cuff and looked down at her sternly. "You seem to have the same name as the elderly lady who looks after you. How's this ? I don't believe your name is Anna at all."

This was a little hard, as it was the only true statement she had yet made.

"My name is Anna," she said, indignantly. "And so is hers. It's only a coincidence that we both have the same name ; in fact, it was because of that that we first made friends, years ago at school. You see, we began by being at school together, and we've been together ever since, more or less. And—and when I left home, she let me come and live in her flat, that's all. It doesn't seem odd to me, but perhaps you don't know much about girls' Christian names ? And she isn't elderly at all ! She's young, and rather pretty, and——"

"Oh, all right ; I don't care what she's like. Don't forget about Monday ; and look here, you can come in that hat ; it's rather nice. Good-bye."

"I shall wear my very oldest hat and all the clothes that don't suit me," she resolved, rebelliously, as she went downstairs.

She surprised her maid very much at dinner-time, that evening, by laughing softly to herself at intervals ; and she might have been discovered, more than once, with her elbows on the mantelshelf, gazing at the reflection of herself in the mirror. But as the
evening

evening wore on she became, first fretful, then sober, then determined; and she went to bed with a carefully composed letter in her head, which was to be sent without fail on the following morning. She came down to breakfast and wrote it; kept it till lunch-time, and stamped it; re-read it at tea-time, and burnt it. She was very cross all the evening, and decided that she was run down, and wanted a change. The next morning she was convinced she had influenza, and took a large dose of ammoniated quinine, and sent a special messenger to her greatest friend. Her greatest friend was out of town, which reminded her that she wanted a change, and she telegraphed to Brighton for rooms. The reply came that they would be vacant on Monday, and she wired back that she did not want them at all. The next day was Sunday and her At Home day; and she came to the conclusion that her circle of friends was a very dull one, and that no one who was a bit nice ever called on her At Home day, and that the only interesting people were the people who never called on one at all, the people, in fact, whom one met in odd ways without any introduction; and at this point of her reflections she laughed unaccountably, and resolved to give up her At Home day. She had made two engagements with two separate friends for Monday afternoon; but when it came, she threw them both over and started for a walk across the park at half-past one. At a quarter to two she hailed a hansom in the Bayswater road, and told the cabman to drive quickly, and at his own not unreasonable request supplied him further with an address in the West of London. And at two precisely, she was toiling up the long flights of stone stairs that led to Askett's studio, wondering crossly what had induced her to embark in such an absurd enterprise, and still more what was making her persist in it now.

“It's quite reasonable to undertake to do a mad thing one day;
but

but to go and *do* it the next is unpardonable," she grumbled to herself, as she knocked at the door of the middle studio. She remembered with relief that Tom Hallaford had gone abroad for a few weeks, which considerably lessened the chances of detection; and for the rest—it was an adventure, and that was always something. So it was her usual smiling, rather impudent face that finally greeted Askett when he opened the door to her.

"So you didn't forget, after all? Made sure you would," he observed. "People who forget their own names can forget anything."

"I didn't forget my own name," said Anna, truthfully, a remark of which he naturally missed the point.

They did not talk at all for the first hour or so, and Anna began to feel distinctly bored. Being a model was not half so much fun as she had expected to find it, and it made her extremely sleepy. She had hoped for a new sensation, and the only one she felt was an overwhelming dulness. Nothing but her sense of the ridiculous prevented her from throwing up the whole game on the spot, but a single glance at his stern, uncompromising features kept her silent. "Just imagine how he would sneer!" she thought; and the mere idea made her toss her head and laugh scornfully.

"Keep still, please," he said, inexorably. "What's the joke?"

"That is precisely what I can't tell you," said Anna, laughing again. "If I did it wouldn't be a joke at all, you see."

"I'm afraid I don't, but that may be because I haven't known you long enough to have grasped your system of conversation. It's rather difficult to talk to a person who only tells you the ends of her thoughts, as it were. If I were a conjurer, or a medium, or somebody like that, it might be all right."

"It

"It isn't half so difficult as talking to a person who doesn't talk at all," retorted his model.

"Perhaps not," said Askett, indifferently. "Will you kindly lower your chin a little, it has a tendency to—thanks. You were saying——"

"I was saying that conversation with a person who is only interested in your stupid chin isn't any fun at all," said Anna, who was beginning to feel both tired and cross. Askett glanced at her with a look of mild surprise.

"Then why be a model?" was all he said.

"That's exactly what I want to know myself. I mean," she added, hastily, "it isn't my fault. I—I wouldn't be a model if I could help it, but I can't."

"Models never can help it," said Askett, sceptically. "Troubles at home, I suppose? Your friends don't know you sit? I thought so. Never knew you'd have to come to this, and so on. Of course, yes."

"You're very unfeeling," remarked Anna, who had assented by nods to the touching story of her life as related by Askett. "You should try being a model for an afternoon, and then you'd know."

"My dear young lady, one occupation at a time is always enough for a man," said Askett, quietly. "Probably that is why I am interested merely in your features. Does the elderly lady, I mean the other Anna, know that you are a model?"

"Yes, she does," said Anna, fervently. "She doesn't like my doing it at all; but how can I help it? She thinks it is too hard work, and I *quite* agree with her."

"If you don't mind," said Askett, who had not been listening; "I wish you would keep to subjects that don't excite you quite so much. Whenever you are being smart, or funny, or injured, you poke your chin in the air; and it's disconcerting. Supposing you

were

were to think of some quiet elderly topic, such as cats, or politics, or the lesser clergy ? ”

“ Perhaps, if I were to think of nothing to say at all, you would like it better,” cried Anna.

“ Perhaps,” said Askett, with a stony indifference.

“ I may as well tell you,” continued Anna, controlling her indignation with difficulty, “ that whenever I am silent I have a most *horrible* expression.”

“ Never mind about the expression,” said Askett. “ That’s my business, not yours. Sulk away as much as you please, as long as it keeps you quiet.”

In spite of his want of interest in her and his utter lack of observation, he was considerably astonished when she sprang suddenly down from her platform, overturning the chair with a clatter, and faced him angrily. It was unlike any previous experience he had had with models, and he began to realise that there was something unusual about this one, though what it was he did not precisely know, and that the moment had come for him to deal with it. So he put down his charcoal, and pulled forward a chair and a box ; led her gently to the chair and sat down on the box himself, and felt for his tobacco-pouch.

“ Now, look here,” he said, holding up his hand to stop her as she began to speak ; “ I know all about it. So, if you don’t mind, I think we’ll cut the first part. You’ve not been used to such treatment, and you didn’t come here to be insulted. Very well ; you didn’t. But you came here to be my model, and I naturally expect you to behave like a model, and not like any other young woman who wishes to make conversation. Surely, that’s reasonable, isn’t it ? ”

“ It might be if—I liked being a model, perhaps. But I don’t,” said Anna, rather lamely. She had found her new sensation,

tion, but it did not amuse her ; she had never been lectured before, and she was not sure whether she felt angry or merely puzzled. Askett smiled slightly.

"That is hardly my fault," he replied. "I didn't suggest your vocation to you, did I?"

She was burning to tell him that he had, that he, and her own freakishness, and Fate, were entirely responsible for her vocation ; but again the dread of his ridicule kept her silent, and she only baffled him once more by breaking into a peal of mirthful laughter.

"Oh, heavens !" he groaned. "How is one to deal with a thing like that ? What in the name of wonder is the joke *now* ?"

"It—it's the same joke as before," gasped Anna. "You really don't know what an awfully good joke it is."

"You must forgive me if I don't even want to find out," said Askett, shortly ; and he got up and went to the window and looked out. The situation was not dignified, and he apostrophised the whole race of models, and wondered why they could not see that a chap wanted to work, instead of playing up to him with their hopelessly feminine ways. And then he realised that this particular one had stopped laughing, and was waiting for him to say something.

"Well ?" he said gruffly.

"I'm awfully sorry," said Anna, who was secretly a little ashamed of herself. The fact is, I'm rather a new hand at being a model, and it still makes me feel drowsy, and if I hadn't talked nonsense just now I should have gone to sleep. It isn't so very long since I had to earn my own living, and one doesn't get used to it all at once, don't you know. Shall I go on sitting, now ?"

He did not answer for a second or two. For the first time he had noticed her way of speaking, and it struck him that perhaps
she

she was less of a fraud than most models who profess to have come down in the world, and that her family might have been decent people after all. He began to feel a little remorse for having been hard on her.

"Look here," he said, still gruffly. "I'm not going to do any more to-day. And I think you won't quite do for what I wanted, so you needn't come back to-morrow. I'll pay you all the same till the end of the week, so you'll be able to take a holiday with a clear conscience. Perhaps, you won't find it so tiring when you've had a rest. And the next chap you sit for may not mind your talking."

She stood quite still while he went across the room to fetch her cloak. Somehow, she was not so pleased at her unexpected deliverance as she would have been ten minutes ago. She had an uncomfortable sensation of having behaved like a child, and added to this was a vague feeling of shame at allowing him to think she was poor and friendless, and in need of his help. So she stepped up to him and took the cloak out of his hand.

"I don't want a holiday, thank you," she said. "You are a brick, but I would sooner keep my part of the bargain if you'll let me. I wasn't really tired, I was lazy."

He shrugged his shoulders, and realised that his pity had been wasted.

"As you like," he said, shortly, and Anna climbed up to her chair again.

It was indisputable that she was an irreproachable model for the rest of the afternoon, that she abstained from all temptation to elevate her chin, and met his few attempts at conversation with subdued monosyllables; but for all that, the wish to work had completely deserted him, and he yawned at last and looked at his watch, and said it was time for tea.

"You

"You may talk now," he said, as he put on the kettle.

"Thanks. But there isn't anything to say," said Anna.

"Does that make any difference?" he asked, with an unexpected smile that propitiated her; and she came down and offered to cut the bread and butter. He shook his head, and possessed himself of the loaf.

"Stay where you are, I'll look after this. Women always make it taste of the knife! Hullo! offended again? I'm sorry, but you know they do."

"They don't in—in the other Anna's flat. But you've never been there, of course; and I suppose you'll never go, will you?"

"Depends on the other Anna, doesn't it? Do you think she'd have me?"

"I'm quite certain she would," said his model, with such assurance that a less absorbed person would have suspected something of the truth. As it was, he only looked slightly amused and asked for a reason.

"Oh, because Anna always likes odd people who don't talk much; and she doesn't think them musty or anything like that, just because they're not usual. She'd call you interesting, and quarrel with every one who didn't agree with her, and be frightfully glad all the while because they didn't."

"Sugar?" asked Askett, who had again not been listening.

"Two lumps, please. So do you, don't you? I *knew* you would! So does Anna. I think you'd like Anna too, rather."

"Ah! What makes you think that?"

"Well, you've got some sense of humour, enough to know she wasn't really laughing at you. Most people are afraid of her, you know; and they think she doesn't feel things because she laughs; and of course she does feel them all the same. She hates people

to

to be afraid of her ; but you are never afraid of any one, are you ? And you'd understand why she laughs. Oh yes, you'd like Anna."

"You are a very devoted friend," said Askett.

"I believe I do like her better than any one else I know," admitted Anna.

"Better than yourself ?"

"Much better," she said, and began laughing again with no apparent reason.

"Oh dear," said Askett, "is it that joke again ?"

But she was afraid of rousing his suspicions, and evaded his question. She was very anxious, just then, that his suspicions should not be roused.

When she left, he asked her again if she would not like to have a holiday till the end of the week.

"Am I such a very bad model then ?" she asked.

"You are the most irritating model I have ever endured, but you can come back at two to-morrow," was his reply.

Several times that evening, she took up her pen to write and tell him that she would not come any more, and each time she laid it down again, and jerked her small chin into the air, and vowed she would go through with it.

"It is an adventure," she said, "and it is too rare to be wasted."

"So for the sake of an adventure, she knocked once more at the door of Askett's studio. He opened it immediately, and held out his hand in greeting ; but he was very businesslike in his manner, and set to work directly she was ready.

"I shall try your profile to-day," he said, screwing up his easel.

"You'll regret it," observed Anna.

"Possibly.

"Possibly. Kindly turn your head a little further away; that'll do. What's wrong about your profile, please?"

"There's nothing wrong about it," she said, indignantly. "But I always show people my full face if I can; it's got more character."

"Women are so commercial," remarked Askett. "They make the most of every little advantage they think they possess."

"I must say," retorted Anna, "that for one who professes so much scorn for the whole sex, your perpetual desire to drag it into the conversation is most surprising."

"How is the other Anna?" asked Askett, rather suddenly.

"Oh, she's all right. She isn't so sure she would like you as I expected her to be."

"Indeed? Can't she contemplate my appalling silence without shuddering? Or is it because my face hasn't got any character in it?"

"Oh, no, your face is all right. And she wouldn't mind your being silent in the least, because she does all the talking herself. She'd only expect you to listen."

"What a clatter there must be when you get together," observed Askett.

"It generally has the effect of silencing us both," said Anna, gravely. "Am I sitting better to-day?"

"A little, yes. But I think I'll try the full face again; perhaps, you won't bob your head round quite so often if you are obliged to look at me."

"One would think I *wanted* to look at you," pouted Anna.

"That is certainly what you have led me to believe," said Askett, looking for another sheet of paper. "Now, don't flare up for nothing at all; I didn't mean to be rude, and I wasn't rude; and

and if you persist in jumping whenever I say anything you don't like, I shall relapse into silence again."

"And on the whole," said Anna, thoughtfully, "your remarks are a little improvement on that deadly silence."

"Now," said Askett, pressing down the drawing pins; "tell me some more about the other Anna. I like your expression when you talk about the other Anna, it's so appreciative. I believe you are a solitary instance of a woman who can endure the charms of another woman without feeling jealous."

"Perhaps it is only the charms of the other Anna," she said, carelessly. "What do you want to know about her?"

"Oh, anything, everything. What does she do, for instance?" said Askett, vaguely. His temporary interest in a woman, who was *not* there with the express purpose of distracting him, was already vanishing as he began to grow interested in his work.

"Do? Has she got to *do* anything? You surely don't suppose she is a model, or anything like that, do you? She's much too lazy to do things; she just has a good time, that's all. All her people are away or dead or at war with her; and she has some money of her own, not nearly enough of course, but still it's something. And she dresses rather well, and has a charming flat—I don't believe you are listening to a word I say, and it's too bad!"

"Indeed I am. It is my way of appearing interested. She dresses rather well, and has a charming flat. What more, please?"

"How much more do you want? That's enough for most people. And why do you want to know all about Anna, when you've never seen her?"

"Oh, surely, because you wanted something to talk about.
Besides,

Besides, you said she would like me. Isn't that enough reason for a man? Chin a little lower, please."

"I said you would like her," said Anna, slowly. "Do you—do you think you would?"

"What do you think?" he asked, smiling at her sudden earnestness. She laughed.

"I think she would irritate you beyond measure! And you would hate her for being frivolous, and she would hate you for being serious."

"Decidedly, we had better not be introduced," said Askett.

The next day, the door was ajar when she arrived, and she pushed it open and walked in without knocking.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and then paused and reddened with pleasure.

"Hullo! it's you, is it?" said Askett, coming forward. "What's up now?"

"Flowers! How beautiful! Where did they come from? I thought you never had any. Oh, doesn't it make the whole place look different?"

"They're all right, I suppose," he replied, indifferently. "Flowers always are. I'm glad you like them, they'll help you not to feel bored, perhaps. You curious child, to make all that fuss over a lot of daffodils! Does the other Anna like flowers as much as you do?"

She turned away with a little movement of dissatisfaction. Of course it was absurd, but for all that she found it impossible to control her growing jealousy for the other Anna.

After that, there were always flowers when she came for a sitting, and she came very often indeed. For Askett was at work

on the illustrations for an eighteenth-century novel, and she posed several times for him as his heroine, a bewitching little figure in a quaint old cloak and large be-feathered hat. They were very good friends by the time the spring came, able to dispute without misconception, and to remain silent without embarrassment ; and Askett, to judge by results, had long ago managed to grasp the system by which her conversation was made. The principal theme of it was still the other Anna ; for, as the beginning of the year grew older, the difficulty of telling him the truth became increasingly greater. It would have meant, at least, some sort of an explanation, and she could not endure explaining why she did things ; indeed, she rarely knew why. Besides, it would have put an end to the sittings, and the sittings amused her enormously, and she always went on doing what amused her. So she continued to impersonate the heroine of the eighteenth-century novel, and her conversation was still about the other Anna.

One day he was more silent than usual. He tried her in various positions and gave them all up in turn, made sketches on odd bits of paper and flung them aside, and ended in throwing down his pencil and saying he was no good.

"Have you got a headache ?" she asked him.

"Headache? No, I'm all right," he said, in the resentful manner with which he repelled all her attempts to find out something about him. "Women always think you're ill if you feel a bit off colour," he added, as though to explain his abruptness.

"The other Anna," she observed, "always has a headache when she is off colour, as you call it. She had one this morning."

"Ah," said Askett, brightening a little, "tell me about the other Anna. Why is she off colour to-day ?"

"Because she is in love," said Anna, lightly ; and she crossed her feet and leaned back in her chair and looked at him.

"In

"In love? The other Anna in love? Why, you told me she had too much sense of humour ever to fall in love. Who's the chap?" It was very ridiculous, but he could not help the sudden pang of disappointment he felt on hearing that the other Anna was in love. It disturbed his impression of her, and he had not known until that moment how strong that impression had grown.

"Oh, he doesn't know she's in love with him, and she couldn't possibly let him know, because he might have a sense of humour too; and then he'd just scoff, and she'd want to kill herself. It—it's a tragedy to fall in love if you've got a sense of humour, isn't it? Oh, of course you don't know." And she began humming a tune.

"Why don't I know? Because I am never in love, or because I have no sense of humour?"

"Oh, you've got a sense of humour right enough," she said, and went on singing softly to herself. Askett put down his pipe half-smoked.

"What is the other Anna like when she is in love?" he asked, and smiled at his wish to know.

"I only know she's very difficult to live with," replied his model, ruefully. "She's very happy or very sad all the time, and she gets impatient with me, as though I could help it. So absurd, isn't it? Poor Anna! You see, she has never been in love before, and she can't make it out. I wish, I do wish she were not in love now; it spoils everything so."

"It generally does," said Askett; and his eyes travelled slowly from the pair of pointed shoes up the pink silk cloak to the large black hat, and turned away swiftly when they rested on her face. "Have you ever been in love?" he asked, suddenly.

"Yes," she said, promptly, and fixed her eyes on him so persistently

persistently that she brought his reluctant gaze back to her, and then laughed softly in his race. "Have you?" she asked.

He smiled indulgently, and returned to the other Anna. "What a fool the fellow must be," he said, jestingly, "to give up a woman like that when she's good enough to fall in love with him."

"Oh, I don't think so," said Anna. "He doesn't know; men never do. And she can't tell him; women never can. It's such hard lines; her life is being quite spoilt because she mustn't say anything. She wouldn't mind so much if she were quite sure the man didn't like her; she'd pull herself together again, and go on. But how is she to find out?"

"Why doesn't she send you to ask him?" suggested Askett.

"Do you know," she said with a queer little smile, "you've made that same old joke again?"

But he noticed that, this time, it did not move her to one or her irresistible peals of laughter.

"After all," she added, casually, "I am not sure that it is a joke at all."

Askett got up and went to look after the kettle; tea would make a diversion, he thought, and they seemed to be in need of a diversion that afternoon. "It strikes me," he said, with his back to her, "that you let yourself worry too much about the love affairs of the other Anna."

"Perhaps I do," replied Anna with the same enigmatical smile. "But it's chiefly your fault; you always want to hear about her, and you never let me talk about anything else. It isn't very flattering to *me*, I must say!" She ended with a pout.

Askett stood up and smiled thoughtfully.

"How absurd!" he said with a half-laugh. "Go and tell your Anna that some one is in love with her, because he has
heard

heard that she is a woman with a sense of humour and a heart ; and see if it doesn't cure her depression ! ”

“ I shouldn't be surprised if it did,” replied Anna.

When she made ready to go, that day, he forgot to put on her cloak for her, and stood irresolutely looking at her with the old nervous frown come back to his face ; and she guessed instinctively that there was something he had to say to her.

“ What is it ? ” she said, involuntarily.

“ It's just this,” he said, speaking very quickly ; “ I don't think I shall want you any more after next week, and—— ”

He stopped, although she had not said anything. She looked steadily at the pink silk cloak that hung across the chair, at the jug of wallflowers on the mantel-shelf, at the two empty cups on the upturned wooden box ; and she drew in her lips with a sharp breath.

“ Yes,” she said, and held out her hand. “ Good-bye.”

“ And when may I come and meet the other Anna ? ” he asked, smiling.

There was already a yard and a half of stone passage between them ; and the space was widening every minute, as she backed towards the staircase, and he into the middle studio.

“ I am afraid she would have too much sense of humour to receive you,” she said, and laughed mockingly, and went away down the long flights of stone stairs.

“ It's all right,” said Askett, congratulating himself. “ She doesn't care. I might have known she wouldn't. These models—ah well ! ” He flung the pink silk cloak on the floor, and sat down on the chair, and relighted his pipe. “ I believe, if she had told me much more about the other girl, I might have fancied myself in love with her. It would be a queer thing, after holding off for all these years, to fall in love with a woman I have never seen ! I wonder what it was that fetched me in that child's

descriptions of her? Strange how fascinating a picture those stray bits of information have made in my mind! Probably, if I were to meet her in the ordinary way, I shouldn't discover any charm in her at all; women are so secretive. I begin to understand the reason for arranging marriages. All the same, I should like to meet her." His eye fell on the pink cloak, as it lay in an effete and shapeless heap on the floor. "There's something very expressive in a woman's clothes, when you've known the woman," he observed, to change the current of his thoughts. But they soon wheeled round again. "I wonder how the other Anna would look in that thing? It's very odd to have kept my interest in the same woman for six, seven, eight weeks, and a woman I haven't even seen. I suppose it's true that all the constancy in a man's heart is for the woman he has never seen, but still—However, it's a safe passion, and I won't risk it by making her acquaintance. No," he added, moving his chair round so that he could not see the pink silk cloak, "I will not ask for an introduction to the other Anna."

On his way home he ran against Tom Hallaford, and they walked down Piccadilly together. Tom Hallaford was only just back from Rome, and it was consequently some time before the conversation became sufficiently local and personal to interest his companion, who had not been to Rome at all. But Askett got his chance after a while.

"Yes, I've been pretty busy," he said, in reply to an inquiry about his work. "By the way, you remember that model of yours I took pity on, one day in the winter, when you kept her waiting? Oh yes, you do; pretty little girl rather, big hat, name Wilson, lives with a Miss Angell. My dear fellow, one would think you had never even heard her name! Well, never mind about the model; I don't want to talk about her. But I
do

do want to know something about the girl she lives with, the other Anna, you know—Miss Angell, in fact.”

“I suppose you know what you’re playing at,” said Tom, good-naturedly; “but I’m bothered if I do. Miss Angell doesn’t live with any one as far as I know. She never introduced me to a model in her life; in fact, I only know her very slightly. Some aunt of hers commissioned me to paint her portrait; that was how she came to sit for me. Who is the model you were talking about? You must have got mixed somehow, old chap.”

“Mixed?” said Askett, mechanically, standing in a vague manner on the edge of the kerbstone. “Mixed, yes, that’s it, of course; certainly mixed. I suppose—in fact, I believe—well, it’s that joke, you know.” And to the mystification of his companion, who stood staring after him, he beckoned with an exaggerated composure to a hansom, gave the driver an address in Belgravia, and drove away without a word of farewell.

The other Anna answered her own bell, that evening, because her maid was out for a holiday. And she found Askett standing on the door mat outside.

“Oh!” was all she could find to say, though it was extremely expressive in the particular way she said it.

“It’s all right,” said Askett, in the most courteous and self-possessed manner possible. “I’ve only come to ask the other Anna to marry me, instead of the chap who doesn’t know how to appreciate her. Do you think she will?”

There was the dawn of a laugh in her eyes as she threw the door wider.

“I believe,” she replied, “that she still has a lurking fondness for the other chap. But if you’ll come in I’ll tell you that little joke of mine, and then——”

“No need.” observed Askett, “I think I know it.”

Two Poems

By Douglas Ainslie

I—The Death of Verlaine

"Rien de plus cher que la chanson grise."

VERLAINE.

So the poet of grey slips away,
The poor singer from over the strait,
Who sat by the Paris highway,
Whose life was the laughter of fate ;

The laughter of fate, but the woe
Of the gods and the mortals who heard
The mystical modes as they flow—
Broken phrase, riven lute, broken word,

Broken up as the attar is crushed
By the steel of the mercantile weights
From the soul of the roses that blushed
Through the scroll of Elysian gates.

As

As a sphynx-moth with shivering wings
Hangs over the thyme in the garden
But an instant, then fairyward brings
The honey he gathers for guerdon ;

So you the oases of life
Just touched with your frayed, rapid wings,
Poor poet, and drew from the strife
The peculiar honey that clings

To your magical measures and ways,
As they sway with the moods of the soul,
Semi-conscious, through haze, in amaze,
Making on toward a dim distant goal.

“ Be always a poet or saint ”—
Poor Lélian was saint and was poet,
But not always—for sometimes we faint—
Then he must forget that we know it ;

In iris and opal forget—
His iris, his bow in the sky,
Fickle bow for the storm, and that yet
Was his only storm-bow to steer by.

Good-bye, then, poor poet, good-bye !
You will not be long there alone :
Very soon for your help we shall cry,
Lost souls in a country unknown.

Then

Two Poems

Then Lélian, king of the land,
Rich Lélian will teach us the speech
That here we but half understand—
Kind Lélian will reach us his hand.

II—Her Colours

ROSE, grey, and white—
Roses, sad seas, and light
Straight from the sun—
These are your colours.

Red necklet spun
When the Eastern day was done
By fairy fingers
Of lotus flowers.

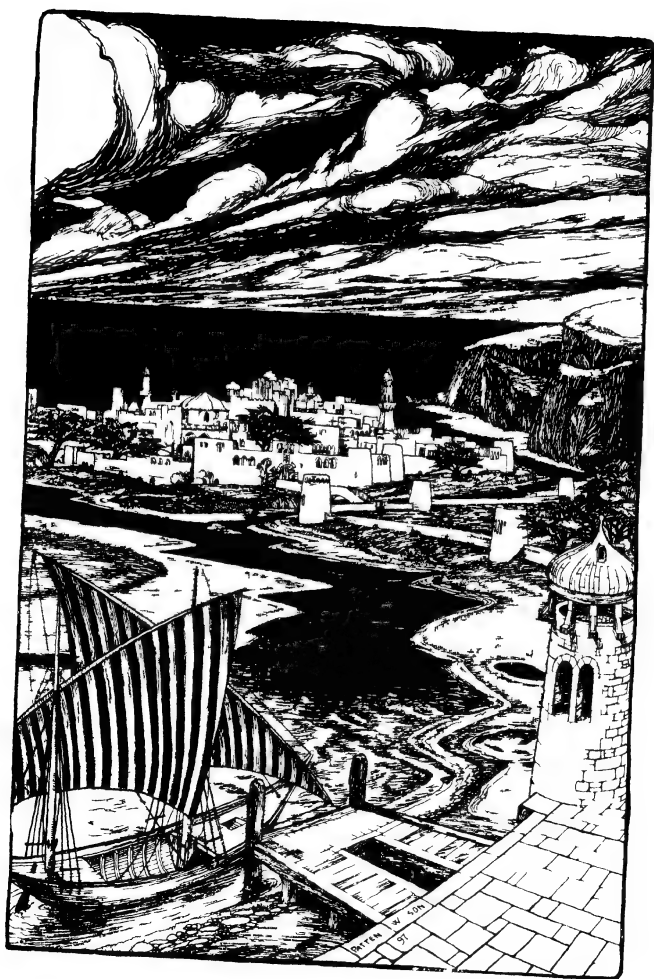
In those white ivories
Your arms, a charm there lies,
Charm to conquer
The bravest singers :

And for your grey
Sweet, deep eye-oceans—they
Do yet declare
Queen Venus lingers.

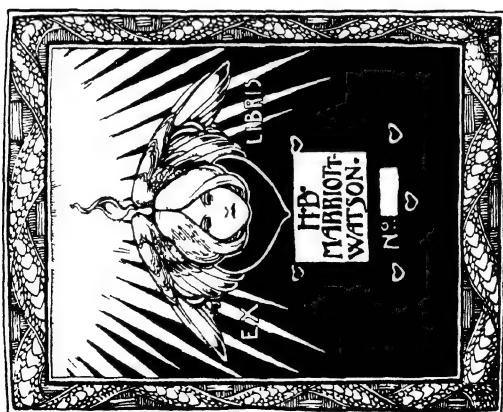
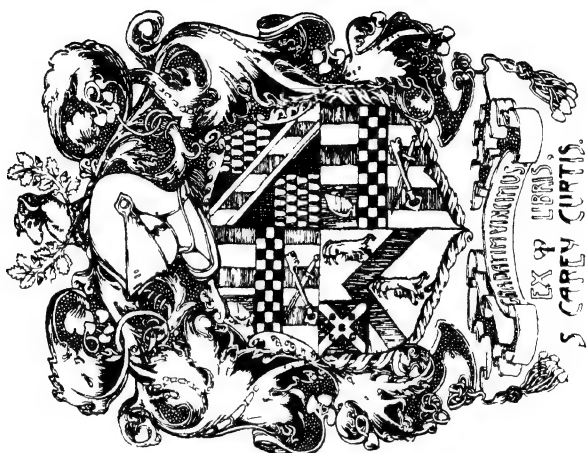
Four Pictures

By Patten Wilson

- I. An Eastern Town
- II. Bookplate for Egerton Clairmonte, Esq.
- III. Bookplate for H. B. Marriott Watson, Esq.
- IV. Bookplate for S. Carey Curtis, Esq.







A Melodrama—the Union

By T. Baron Russell

Is it not almost unprintable? To give to it anything of actuality one would have—no, not to invent, but to suppress. As a bit of life it was too impossibly dramatic, too fictional, too much—what can one say?—too much like a story in a Christmas number, and a story constructed in the worst style, at that.

Yet, it happened! and the Organist is my witness. She had taken me to see the Workhouse Chapel: incidentally, to hear her play (for which purpose one would go much further than to this chapel), little purposing, as you may believe, to give me sheer Surrey melodrama thrown in. The beadle admitted us by a little door, cut in the black painted wooden gates. He admitted us with a smile. A Union Beadle *can* smile on occasion, and I was to find soon that the coming of the Organist was the signal for many smiles in this “Union.” One or two inmates were waiting in the paved courtyard. They all smiled, too, at sight of the Organist, and hovered forward to greet her. One man had a crutch, and walked with difficulty, but he shuffled quickly over the flagstones, and followed us with the others into the chapel, where a good number were already waiting—just so many vacant-looking, tired

tired old faces, that brightened up and became animated, covetous of an individual recognition, when the Organist passed through to her seat.

The most devout of the intending worshippers was a woman of, perhaps, no more than fifty, who alone took no heed, kneeling already with a rapt, ecstatic gaze that made her face almost "eerie." She was, I learned, hopelessly imbecile, and had to be led into and out of church, the only incident of her life. An appalling amount of tribulation seemed to be collected here and personified in these old women. One felt a more instinctive sympathy somehow for them than for the men, poor fellows. Even a couple of younger women, who carried a baby apiece, did not convey the same aching sense of desolation as these shrivelled, wrinkling old crones, in their hideous round bonnets and grey shawls.

The chapel was a gaunt structure, devoid of adornment; but some one had put a few yellow daisies in a tumbler on the close stove—cold now, and shining with blacklead. On the mean font, placed in emblematic neighbourhood to the doorway, stood a small crockery jug. "A christening afterwards," the Organist whispered to me, in explanation.

She took her seat. The organ, unscreened, stood in a corner, facing the congregation. An old, grey man, in spectacles, sat at the side, leaning on the bellows handle, ready to perform his duty when the Organist should give the sign.

She pulled out a few stops and uncovered the single manual. The paupers moved in their seats, leaning forward, anticipant. It was easy to gather that the air was a familiar one. At the first notes, nods and smiles of delighted recognition were exchanged. The unmusical mind only takes kindly to tunes that it knows. Not a pauper moved until the last note had sounded and died away.

Then

Then they leaned back, settling in their places with a wriggle of gratification, to wait, fidgeting, for Evensong to begin.

The stroke of half-past six brought the surpliced chaplain, brisk and businesslike. The Organist played him in with slow, droning chords, dying away in muffled pedal notes as he kneeled awhile in his place. It was his only deliberate act, almost, through the service. The congregation shuffled hurriedly to its feet when he rose to gabble the exhortation. One of the babies—the subjects of the anticipated sacrament—woke up and had to be hushed after the fashion of babes at an age when, even for the infant pauper, food is easy to come by.

Evensong was briskly performed. Then the clergyman made his way to the font, emptied into it what may have been half a pint of water from the little crockery jug, and began to read the Order for the Publick Baptism of Infants. “Have these children been already baptized, or no?”

The mothers stood up, nervous and inaudible, the only sponsors. In the more essential parts they had to be prompted individually by the chaplain in a stage-whisper: “Say ‘I renounce them all’” —“Say ‘All this I steadfastly believe.’” One of them was a sullen woman, well over thirty, with a brutish face and disappearing chin; the other, a light-haired, rosy-cheeked girl, who hung her head and cried quietly all through the ceremony. Neither wore a wedding-ring. In the brisk time set by the clergyman, the ordeal was soon over, and the congregation—the women, old and young, intensely interested in the babies—rose to sing the baptismal hymn:

“In token that thou shalt not fear
Christ crucified to own,
We print the Cross upon thee here,
And stamp thee His alone.”

There

There was an incongruity, an insincerity, in the ceremonial thus hurriedly bustled through, as though even the Sacrament must be brief for a workhouse brat. I do not say that it was done brutally or with indifference ; but there was something perfunctory and unreal about it. I think we were all glad when it was over, and the awakened babies were being hustled off to sleep again in the usual manner. There had been an impersonal unreality in the whole service. These tired old women, chanting the canticles—it was wonderful, at their average age, how well the Organist had got them to sing—seemed to find nothing of promise, no hint of comfort even in the Psalms or the sublime *Magnificat*. But at least they were not indifferent to the music. *That* was personal; *that* “belonged” to them. There was no “playing-out” in the closing voluntary: the whole congregation sat it through, mothers and all, and beamed gratefully on the kind face of the Organist, their friend, when at last she closed the instrument and passed through the waiting people to the door.

II

As we crossed the courtyard, the Organist delaying to speak to one here and one there—she appeared to know every one by name and history—we became aware of a disturbance in the gateway. A young fellow, dressed like a sailor, had his foot inside the little door in the gate and was endeavouring to push past the beadle.

“I tell you it ain’t visiting time,” said that functionary, sourly. “You can see ’er at the proper time : you can’t see ’er when it isn’t the proper time. I told you that before, and it’s no good your making a disturbance, because you can’t go in.”

“What is it?” I was asking the Organist—she seemed to under-
stand

stand so instinctively everything here, in this somewhat unknown territory, that I did not doubt her perfect familiarity with this kind of dispute—when there was a cry behind me, and the fair-haired mother, her child still in her arms, rushed past us like a whirlwind, pushed aside the outraged beadle, and fell, in a heap, baby and all, into the arms of the sailor.

What followed, happened in an instant. There was no pause, no further altercation with the door-keeper, who would probably have demurred to the whole highly irregular proceeding. The sailor gathered up the woman in his arms, lifted her impetuously over the step into the street and banged the little door behind them. A little assemblage of paupers had crowded into the covered passage to witness this drama ; and then, in a flash, it was over, the door closed, and the beadle—he was a small lean man, in a jacket, nothing like the conventional Bumble—was left gasping behind.

* * * * *

We overtook the couple—the trio, to be more exact—at the corner of the street. The sailor was carrying the baby now, and the woman was fastening her bodice. The red sunset rays glinted on her hair and made it brightly golden ; a shower was drying up, and the air was clear and fresh-smelling. The lime-blossom on a tree that overhung a garden fence—for we are rural, here in the Southern Suburb—was giving off the beginning of its evening fragrance. The street was deserted and quite silent. A scrap of talk floated to us down the hill from the man and woman in front.

“Only landed this morning,” the man was saying. “Couldn’t get no news of you off the old people ; they wouldn’t tell me nothing, and I bin lookin’ everywheres for you, all day. Then I met yer sister, and she —— told me ; and I come round in a rush

to

to fetch yer out. They didn't want to let me in—ah! I'd 'ave showed what for, in about another minute—and then I see yer comin'!" The baby began to cry feebly. The man hushed it awkwardly, stopping in his walk to do so. He would not give it up to the girl though; and she hung on his arm looking up into his face, transfigured, unrecognisable; then they passed out of our sight.

The Organist laid her hand upon my arm, her eyes glistening. "We may as well go home, I think, mayn't we?" she said.

III

It was nearly a month later, when I found a letter from the Organist on my breakfast table.

"If you could take me to the parish church on Saturday morning—yes, I mean Saturday, not Sunday—" she wrote, "I could show you the finish of an affair that I think you are interested in."

I wondered, vaguely, what the "affair" was, and, having been a little late in presenting myself, did not succeed, in a hurried walk to the church, in eliciting an explanation of the summons. "Make haste, and you will see," said the Organist; and she would tell me no more.

We found the church almost empty, save for a little group, facing an ascetic-looking young priest in the chancel.

"Well, what is it, then?" I whispered. The Organist answered me by a motion of the head altarwards, and I recognised my friend the sailor, looking very uncomfortable in a stiff suit of tweeds. Then the words which the priest was reciting gave me a last clue to the situation.

"Into

"Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can show any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him NOW speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace!" We were witnessing that service of the Church which, as a cynic remarked, "begins with 'Dearly Beloved,' and ends with 'amazement.'"

A pew, half way down the aisle, gave us decent shelter, within earshot, and we paid attention to this reticent, informal, solemnisation of matrimony. There were no bridesmaids, as you may suppose—no groomsmen—only a perfunctory pew-opener as witness, and an awkward youth in a large jacket, who officiated, blushing profusely, as "father," giving "this woman to this man." He may have been half a year her senior. The girl's parents, apparently, had not yet forgiven her. At length, duly united, the couple followed the clergyman bashfully into the vestry, with their witnesses. The baby, apparently, had been placed in some safe keeping, as an unsuitable attendant at this ceremonial. We viewed the departure of the group, the ring proudly displayed on the girl's ungloved hand; and my companion (whom I began to suspect of having abetted in this *dénouement*) had a word to say to the clergyman. Then, as we passed out of the gates, I asked her, "Well! How in the world did you follow them up?"

"Oh, nothing easier," she replied. "I had a notion of what would happen, and of course I knew the girl's name through the Union people, so that there was no difficulty in finding out from Mr. Noster (that is the curate, who has just married them) when the banns were put up.

"I thought," she added, with her delightful smile, "that you would be glad to see the end of it!"

And I was glad: but really it is hardly printable; it is *too* improbable, too melodramatic.

Oasis

By Rosamund Marriott Watson

FAR spreads the desert before and the waste behind us,
Grey and a-dust—but here the forest is green,
Here nor the irons of Eld nor of winter bind us,
Neither the grief of the known nor the unforeseen.

Faintly the south wind stirs, with the woods awaking,
Softly the kind sun shines, like a golden flower.
Wake, O my heart, and remember . . . the buds are breaking.
Rest, O my heart, and forget . . . 'tis the magic hour !

Joy comes once more ; once more through the wet leaves
 swinging
Vistas of silver and blue in the birch-woods gleam ;
In the dusk of the cold spring dawn with a blackbird singing—
Singing the Song of Songs by the Gates of Dream.

A Pair of Parricides

By Francis Watt

THERE is a new series of *State Trials* continuing the old and edited with a skill and completeness altogether lacking in its predecessor; yet its formal correctness gives an impression of dulness. You think with regret of Howell's thirty-three huge volumes, that vast magazine of curiosities and horrors, of all that is best and worst in English history. How exciting life was long ago, to be sure, and how persistently it grows duller! What a price we pay for the smug comfort of our time! People shuddered of yore; did they yawn quite so often? Howell and the folk he edits knew how to tell a story. Judges, too, were not wont to exclude interesting detail for that it wasn't evidence, and the compilers did not end with a man's condemnation. They had too keen a sense of what was relished of the general; the last confession and dying speech, the exit on the scaffold or from the cart, are told with infinite gusto. What a terrible test Earth's great unfortunates underwent! Sir Thomas More's delicate fencing with his judges, the exquisite courtesy wherewith he bade them farewell, make but half the record; you must hear the strange gaiety which flashed in the condemned cell and by the block ere you learn the man's true nature. And to know Raleigh you must see him at Winchester under the brutal insults

of Coke. "Thou art a monster, thou hast an English face but a Spanish heart;" again, "I thou thee, thou traitor;" and at Palace Yard, Westminster, on that dreary October morning urging the sheriff to hurry, since he would not be thought fear-shaken when it was but the ague; for these are all-important episodes in the life of that richly dressed, stately and gallant figure your fancy is wont to picture sweeping the Spanish Main in his Elizabethan warship. Time would fail to tell of Strafford and Charles and Laud and a hundred others, for the collection begins with Thomas à Becket in 1163 and comes down to Thistlewood in 1820. Once familiar with those close-packed, badly printed pages, you find therein a deeper, a more subtle charm than cunningest romance can furnish forth. The account of Mary Stuart's ending has a finer hold than Froude's magnificent and highly decorated picture. Study at first hand "Bloody Jeffreys's" slogging of Titus Oates with that unabashed rascal's replies during his trial for perjury, or again my Lord's brilliant though brutal cross-examination of Dunn in the "Lady" Alice Lisle case, during the famous or infamous Western Circuit, and you will find Macaulay's wealth of vituperative rhetoric, tiresome and pointless verbiage. Also you will prefer to construct your own Braxfield from trials like those of Thomas Muir in 1793, and of Alexander Scott and Maurice Margarot in 1794, rather than accept the counterfeit presentment which Stevenson's master-hand has limned in *Weir of Hermiston*.

But the interests are varied. How full of grotesque and curious horrors are the prosecutions for witchcraft! There is that one, for instance, in March 1665 at Bury St. Edmunds before Sir Matthew Hale, with stories of bewitched children, and plague-stricken women, and satanic necromancy. Again, there is the diverting exposure of Richard Hathaway in 1702, and how the
rogue

rogue pretended to vomit pins and abstain from meat or drink for quite miraculous periods. The trial of the obscurer criminal has its own charm. Where else do you find such Dutch pictures of long-vanished interiors or exteriors? You touch the *vie intime* of a past age; you see how kitchen and hall lived and talked; what master and man, mistress and maid thought and felt; how they were dressed, what they ate, of what they gossiped. Again, how oft your page recalls the strange, mad, picturesque ways of old English law. *Benefit of clergy* meets you at every turn, the *Peine Fort et Dure* is explained with horrible minuteness, the lore of *Ship Money* as well as of *Impresment of Seamen* is all there. Also is an occasional touch of farce, but what phase of man's life goes unrecorded in those musty old tomes?

Howell's collection comes down only to 1820. Reform has since then purged our law, and the whole set is packed off to the Lumber Room. In a year's current reports you may find the volumes quoted once or twice, but that is "but a bravery," as Lord Bacon would say, for their law is "a creed outworn." Yet the human interest of a story remains, however antiquated the setting, incapable of hurt from Act of Parliament. So, partly for themselves, partly as samples of the bulk, I here present in altered form two of these tragedies, a pair of parricides; one Scots of the seventeenth, the other English of the eighteenth century.

The first is the trial of Philip Standsfield at Edinburgh, in 1688, for the murder of his father, Sir James Standsfield, of New Mills, in East Lothian. To-day New Mills is called Amisfield; it lies on the south bank of the Tyne, a mile east of Haddington. There is a fine mansion-house, about a century old, in the midst of a well-wooded park, and all round are the superbly tilled Lothian fields, as *dulcia arva* as ever the Mantuan sang. Amisfield got its
present

present name thus : Colonel Charteris, infamed (in the phrase of Arbuthnot's famous epitaph) for the "undeviating pravity of his manners" (hence lashed by Pope in many a stinging line), purchased it early in the last century and renamed it from the seat of his family in Nithsdale. Through him it passed by descent to the house of Wemyss, still its present owners. Amongst its trees and its waters the place lies away from the beaten track, and is now as charmingly peaceful a spot as you shall anywhere discover. Name gone and aspect changed, local tradition has but a vague memory of the two-centuries-old tragedy whereof it was the centre.

Sir James Standsfield, an Englishman by birth, had married a Scots lady and spent most of his life in Scotland. After the Restoration he had established a successful cloth factory at the place called New Mills, and there lived, a prosperous gentleman. But he had much domestic trouble, chiefly from the conduct of his eldest son Philip, who, though well brought up, led a wild life. Serving abroad in the Scots regiment, he had been condemned to death at Treves, but had escaped by flight. Certain notorious villainies had also made him familiar with the interior of the Marshalsea, and the prisons of Brussels, Antwerp and Orleans. Sir James at last was moved to disinherit him in favour of his second son John. Partly cause and partly effect of this, Philip was given to cursing his father in most extravagant terms (of itself a capital offence according to old Scots law); he affirmed his parent "girmed upon him like a sheep's head in a tongs;" on several occasions he had even attempted that parent's life: all which is set forth at great length in the "ditty" or indictment upon which he was tried. No doubt Sir James went in considerable fear of his unnatural son. A certain Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, advocate, testifies that eight days before the end he met the old gentlemen in the Parliament Close, Edinburgh, whereupon "the
defunct

defunct invited him to take his morning draught." As they partook Sir James bemoaned his domestic troubles. Yes, said Mackenzie, but why had he "disherished his son?" And the defunct answered: "Ye do not know my son, for he is the greatest debauch in the earth. And that which troubles me most is that he twice attempted my own person."

Upon the last Saturday of November 1687 the elder Standsfield travelled from Edinburgh to New Mills in company with Mr. John Bell, minister of the gospel, who was to officiate the next day in Morham Church (Morham is a secluded parish on the lower slope of the Lammermoors, some three miles south-west of New Mills: the church plays an important part in what follows). Arrived at New Mills the pair supped together, thereafter the host accompanied his guest to his chamber, where he sat talking "pertinently and to good purpose" till about ten o'clock. Left alone our divine gat him to bed, but had scarce fallen asleep when he awoke in terror, for a terrible cry rang through the silence of the winter night. A confused murmur of voices and a noise of folk moving about succeeded. Mr. Bell incontinently set all down to "evil wicked spirits," so having seen to the bolts of his chamber door, and having fortified his timid soul with prayers, he huddled in bed again; but the voices and noises continuing outside the house, he crept to the window, where, peering out, he perceived naught in the darkness. The noises died away across the garden towards the river, and Bell lay quaking till the morning. An hour after day Philip came to his chamber to ask if his father had been there, for he had been seeking him upon the banks of the water. "Why on the banks of that water?" queried Bell in natural amazement. Without answer Philip hurriedly left the room. Later that same Sunday morning a certain John Topping coming from Monkkrig to New Mills, along the bank of the
Tyne,

Tyne, saw a man's body floating on the water. Philip, drawn to the spot by some terrible fascination, was looking on (you picture his face). "Whose body was it?" asked the horror-struck Topping, but Philip replied not. Well *he* knew it was his father's corpse. It was noted that, though a hard frosty morning, the bank was "all beaten to mash with feet and the ground very open and mellow." The dead man being presently dragged forth and carried home was refused entry by Philip into the house so late his own, "for he had not died like a man but like a beast"—the suggestion being that his father had drowned himself, and so the poor remains must rest in the woollen mill, and then in a cellar "where there was very little light." The gossips retailed unseemly fragments of scandal, as "within an hour after his father's body was brought from the water, he got the buckles from his father's shoes and put them in his;" and again, there is note of a hideous and sordid quarrel between Lady Standsfield and Janet Johnstoun, "who was his own concubine," so the prosecution averred, "about some remains of the Holland of the woonding-sheet," with some incriminating words of Philip that accompanied.

I now take up the story as given by Umphrey Spurway, described as an Englishman and clothier at New Mills. His suspicions caused him to write to Edinburgh that the Lord Advocate might be warned. Philip lost no time in trying to prevent an inquiry. At three or four of the clock on Monday morning Spurway, coming out of his house, saw "great lights at St. James' Gate;" grouped round were men and horses. He was told they were taking away the body to be buried at Morham, whereat honest Umphrey, much disturbed at this suspicious haste, sighed for the "crowner's quest law" of his fatherland. But on the next Tuesday night, after he had gone to bed, a party of five men, two of them surgeons, came post haste to his house from Edinburgh, and showing him an
order

order "from my Lord Advocate, for the taking up again the body of Sir James Standfield," bid him rise and come. Philip also must go with the party to Morham. Here the grave was opened, the body taken out and carried into the church, where the surgeons made their examination, which clearly pointed to death by strangulation, not by drowning (possibly it struck Spurway as an odd use for a church; it had not seemed so to a Presbyterian Scot of the period). The dead being redressed in his grave clothes must now be set back in his coffin. A terrible thing happened. According to Scots custom, the nearest relative must lift the body, and so Philip took the head, when lo! the corpse gushed forth blood on his hands! He dropped the head—the "considerable noise" it made in falling is noted by one of the surgeons—frantically essayed to wipe off the blood on his clothes, and with frenzied cries of "Lord have mercy upon me, Lord have mercy upon us," fell half swooning across a seat. Strong cordials were administered, and in time he regained his sullen composure.

A strange scene to ponder over, but how terrible to witness! Think of it! The lonely church on the Lammermoors, the dead vast and middle of the dreary night (Nov. 30, 1687), the murdered man, and the parricide's confession (it is so set forth in the ditty) wrung from him (as all believed) by the direct interposition of Providence. What fiction ever equalled this gruesome horror? Even his mother, who had sided with him against the father, scarce professed to believe his innocence. "What if they should put her bairn in prison?" she wailed. "Her bairn" was soon hard and fast in the gloomy old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, to which, as the *Heart of Midlothian*, Scott's novel was in future days to give a world-wide fame. The trial came on next February 6. In Scotland there is no inquest or public magisterial examination to discount the interest of the story, and the crowd that

that listened in the Parliament House to the evidence already detailed had their bellyful of surprises and horrors. The Crown had still in reserve this testimony, sensational and deadly. The prosecution proposed to call James Thomson, a boy of thirteen, and Anna Mark, a girl of ten. Their tender years were objected. My lords, declining to receive them as witnesses, oddly enough consented, at the request of the jury, to take their declaration. The boy told how Philip came to his father's house on the night of the murder. The lad was hurried off to bed, but listened whilst the panel, Janet Johnstoun, already mentioned, and his father and mother softly whispered together for a long time, until Philip's rage got the better of his discretion, and he loudly cursed his father and threatened his life. Next, Philip and Janet left the house, and in the dead of night his father and mother followed. After two hours they crept back again; and the boy, supposed to be sleeping, heard them whisper to each other the story of the murder, how Philip guarded the chamber door "with a drawn sword and a bendit pistol," how it was strange a man should die so soon, how they carried the body to the water and threw it in, and how his mother ever since was afraid to stay alone in the house after nightfall. The evidence of Anna Mark was as to certain criminating words used by her mother, Janet Johnstoun.

Up to this time the panel had been defended by four eminent advocates mercifully appointed thereto by the Privy Council; there had been the usual Allegations, Replies, and Duplies, with frequent citations from Mattheus, Carpzovius, Muscard, and the other fossils, as to the matters contained in the "ditty," and they had strenuously fought for him till now, but after the statement of the children they retired. Then Sir George Mackenzie rose to reply for the Crown. Famous in his own day, his name is not yet forgotten. He was "the bluidy advocate Mackenzie" or
Covenanting

Covenanting legend and tradition, one of the figures in Wandering Willie's tale in *Red Gauntlet* ("who for his worldly wit and wisdom had been to the rest as a god"). He had been Lord Advocate already, and was presently to be Lord Advocate again. Nominally but second counsel he seems to have conducted the whole prosecution. He had a strong case, and he made the most of it. Passionate invective and prejudicial matter were mixed with legal argument. Cultured politician and jurist as he was, he dwelt with terrible emphasis on the scene in Morham Church. "God Almighty himself was pleased to bear a share in the testimonies which we produce," nor was the children's testimony forgotten. "I need not fortifie so pregnant a probation." No! yet he omitted not to protest for "an Assize of Error against the inquest in the case they should assoilzie the pannal"—a plain intimation to the jury that if they found Philip Standsfield "not guilty" they were liable to be prosecuted for an unjust verdict. But how to doubt after such evidence? The jury found the panel guilty, and my lords pronounced a sentence of picturesque barbarity. Standsfield was to be hanged at the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh, his tongue cut out and burned upon the scaffold, his right hand fixed above the east port of Haddington, and his dead body hung in chains upon the Gallow Lee betwixt Leith and Edinburgh, his name disgraced for ever, and all his property forfeited to the Crown. According to the old Scots custom the sentence was given "by the mouth of John Leslie, dempster of court"—an office held along with that of hangman. "Which is pronounced for doom" was the formula wherewith he concluded. On February 15 Standsfield went to his death "in manner alone prescribed."

The second case, not so romantic albeit a love-story is woven through its tangled threads, is that of Mary Blandy, spinster,
tried

tried at Oxford in 1752, before two of the Barons of the Exchequer, for the murder of her father, Francis Blandy, attorney, and town-clerk of Henley-on-Thames. Prosecuting counsel described her as "genteel, agreeable, sprightly, sensible." She was an only child. Her sire being well off, she seemed an eligible match. Some years before the murder, the villain of the piece, William Henry Cranstoun, a younger son of the Scots Lord Cranstoun and an officer recruiting at Henley for the army, comes on the scene. Contemporary gossip paints him the blackest colour. "His shape no ways genteel, his legs clumsy, he has nothing in the least elegant in his manner." He was remarkable for his dulness; he was dissipated and poverty-stricken. More fatal than all, he had a wife and child in Scotland though he brazenly professed the marriage invalid spite the judgment of the Scots courts in its favour. Our respectable attorney, upon discovering these facts, gave the Captain, as he was called, the cold shoulder. The prospect of a match with a lord's son was too much for Miss Blandy, now over thirty, and she was ready to believe any ridiculous yarn he spun about his northern entanglements. Fired by an exaggerated idea of old Blandy's riches, he planned his death and found in the daughter an agent, and, as the prosecution averred, an accomplice.

The way was prepared by a cunning use of popular superstitions. Mysterious sounds of music were heard about; at least, Cranstoun said so; indeed, it was afterwards alleged he "hired a band to play under the windows." If any one asked, "What then?" he whispered "that a wise woman, one Mrs. Morgan, in Scotland," had assured him that such was a sign of death to the head of the house within twelve months. The Captain further alleged that he held the gift of second sight and had seen the worthy attorney's ghost; all which, being carefully reported to the servants by Miss Blandy,
raised

raised a pleasing horror in the kitchen. Cranstoun, from necessity or prudence, left Henley before the diabolical work began in earnest, but he supplied Mary with arsenic in powder, which she administered to her father for many months. The doses were so immoderate that the unfortunate man's teeth dropped whole from their sockets, whereat the undutiful daughter "damn'd him for a toothless old rogue and wished him at hell." Cranstoun, under the guise of a present of Scotch pebbles, sent her some more arsenic, nominally to rub them with. In the accompanying letter, July 18, 1751, he glowingly touched on the beauties of Scotland as an inducement to her, it was supposed, to make haste. Rather zealous than discreet, she near poisoned Anne Emmett, the charwoman, by misadventure, but brought her round again with great quantities of sack whey and thin mutton broth, sovereign remedies against arsenic. Her father gradually became desperately ill. Susannah Gunnell, maidservant, perceiving a white powder at the bottom of a dish she was cleaning, had it preserved. It proved to be arsenic, and was produced at the trial. Susannah actually told Mr. Blandy he was being poisoned; but he only remarked, "Poor lovesick girl! what will not a woman do for the man she loves?" Both master and maid fixed the chief, perhaps the whole, guilt on Cranstoun, the father confining himself to dropping some strong hints to his daughter, which made her throw Cranstoun's letters and the remainder of the poison on the fire, wherefrom the poison was in secret rescued and preserved by the servants.

Mr. Blandy was now hopelessly ill, and though experienced doctors were at length called in, he expired on Wednesday, August 14, 1751. The sordid tragedy gets its most pathetic and highest touch from the attempt made by the dying man to shield his daughter, and to hinder her from incriminating admissions
which

which under excitement and (one hopes) remorse she began to make. And in his last hours he spoke to her words of pardon and solace. That night and again on Thursday morning the daughter made some distracted efforts to escape. "I ran out of the house and over the bridge and had nothing on but a half-sack and petticoat without a hoop—my petticoats hanging about me." But now all Henley was crowded round the dwelling to watch the development of events. The mob pressed after the distracted girl, who took refuge at the sign of the Angel, a small inn just across the bridge. "They were going to open her father," she said, and "she could not bear the house." She was taken home and presently committed to Oxford gaol to await her trial. Here she was visited by the High Sheriff, who "told me by order of the higher powers he must put an iron on me. I submitted as I always do to the higher powers" (she had little choice). Spite her terrible position and those indignities, she behaved with calmness and courage. The trial, which lasted twelve hours, took place on February 29, 1752, in the Divinity School of the University. The prisoner was "sedate and composed without levity or dejection." Accused of felony she had properly counsel only for points of law, but at her request they were allowed to examine and cross-examine the witnesses. Herself spoke the defence, possibly prepared by her advisers, for though the style be artless, the reasoning is exceeding ingenious. She admitted she was passionate, and thus accounted for some hasty expressions; the malevolence of servants had exaggerated these. Betty Binfield, one of the maids, was credibly reported to have said of her, "she should be glad to see the black bitch go up the ladder to be hanged." But the powder? Impossible to deny she had administered that. "I gave it to procure his love." Cranstoun, she affirmed, had sent it from Scotland, assuring her that it would

so work, and Scotland, one notes, seemed to everybody "the shores of old romance," the home of magic incantations and mysterious charms. It was powerfully objected that Francis Blandy had never failed in love to his daughter, but she replied that the drug was given to reconcile her father to Cranstoun. She granted he meant to kill the old man in hopes to get his money, and she was the agent, but (she asserted) the innocent agent of his wicked purpose. This theory, though the best available, was beset with difficulties. She had made many incriminating statements, there was the long time over which the doses had been spread, there was her knowledge of its effects on Anne Emmett the charwoman, there was the destruction of Cranstoun's letters, the production of which would have conclusively shown the exact measure in which guilty knowledge was shared. Finally, there was the attempt to destroy the powder. Bathurst, leading counsel for the Crown, delivered two highly rhetorical speeches, "drawing floods of tears from the most learned audience that perhaps ever attended an English Provincial Tribunal." The jury, after some five minutes' consultation in the box, returned a verdict of "guilty," which the prisoner received with perfect composure. All she asked was a little time "till I can settle my affairs and make my peace with God," and this was readily granted. She was left in prison five weeks. The case continued to excite enormous interest, increased by an account which she issued from prison of her father's death and her relations with Cranstoun. She was constant in her professions of innocence, "nor did anything during the whole course of her confinement so extremely shock her as the charge of infidelity which some uncharitable persons a little before her death brought against her."

Some were convinced and denied her guilt, "as if," said Horace Walpole, "a woman who would not stick at parricide would scruple

scruple a lie." Others said she had hopes of pardon "from the Honour she had formerly had of dancing for several nights with the late P——e of W——s, and being personally known to the most sweet-tempered P——ess in the world." The press swarmed with pamphlets. The Cranstoun correspondence, alleged not destroyed, was published—a very palpable Grub Street forgery!—and a tragedy, *The Fair Parricide*, dismal in every sense, was inflicted on the world. The last scene of all was on April 6, 1752. "Miss Blandy suffered in a black bombazine short sack and petticoat with a clean white handkerchief drawn over her face. Her hands were tied together with a strong black ribband, and her feet at her own request almost touched the ground." ("Gentlemen, don't hang me high, for the sake of decency," an illustration of British prudery which has escaped the notice of French critics.) She mounted the ladder with some hesitation. "I am afraid I shall fall." For the last time she declared her innocence, and soon all was over. "The number of people attending her execution was computed at about 5000, many of whom, and particularly several gentlemen of the university, were observed to shed tears" (tender-hearted "gentlemen of the university!"). "In about half an hour the body was cut down and carried through the crowd upon the shoulders of a man with her legs exposed very indecently." Late the same night she was laid beside her father and mother in Henley Church.

Cranstoun fled from justice and was outlawed. In December that same year he died in Flanders.

Four Pictures

By E. J. Sullivan

I. Helen

II. The Sorceress

III. The Couch

IV. The Mirror









Kit : an American Boy

By Jennie A. Eustace

His sponsors had called him Christopher Bainbridge Bryce. The boy would have preferred something shorter and simpler, perhaps even "a rusty name unwashed by baptism" so that it had been just a good, comfortable mouthful for the other boys to designate him by.

It is not surprising therefore, that at an early age various curtailments were adopted; Kit, and Chris, and Crit; and some boys had fallen into the way, at one time, of calling him Stub. But his mother, resenting this on the ground that perhaps it had been suggested by the fact of his being such a little lad, and having such short, sturdy, round little legs, remonstrated with him on the subject to such effect that Stub enjoyed but a short-lived popularity.

"I don't want any one to call me Stub again. My name is Kit." Being the respected leader of the majority of his fellows in spite of short legs, small bones, and few years—he was only twelve—that settled it. Kit he was to every one from that day.

With one exception.

Brawn and muscle yield unwillingly to diminutive superiority.
The Yellow Book—Vol. XIII. o Goliath's

Goliath's cry, "Give me a Man, that we may fight together," was uttered in contempt of David's size. But in the days of the Philistines, no less than now, a very small hand, directed by an accurate eye and a powerful conviction, was found quite large enough to inject a fatal significance into so simple a weapon as a slung-shot.

Neil Morgan was only one year older than Kit, but he was several years larger and heavier, and he scoffed at Kit's peaceful rule of his followers. He himself went in for tearing off his coat at the slightest provocation, and, in the parlance of the boys, "squaring up," calling out as he did so :

"Come on ! If any one wants to fight, let him come on !"

His combative fists had long burned to belabour Kit's calm, well-tempered anatomy, and Kit's attitude towards the use of his sobriquet furnished the opportunity. He publicly announced that Stub was in every way a suitable name for such a stub of a boy, and declared his intention of distinguishing him by it whenever he saw fit.

This coming to Kit's knowledge, he resolved upon Morgan's early downfall.

"Of course she will feel sore about it," he reflected, "but that fellow must be settled."

Kit, like other leaders the world over, through all the ages exercised his generalship, as he did all else, with the consideration of one fair goddess ever in his mind. He called his goddess Judy. Church records witnessed that she had been baptized Helen Judith, but Judy fell in with his theory regarding easy, comfortable names.

Judy was the passion of Kit's life, the lode-star of his existence. He knew no childish ambition whose realisation was not to benefit her ;

her ; he indulged no roseate dreams in whose radiance she did not shine pre-eminent. Every boyish triumph was incomplete until her approval crowned it, and her rebuke could rob the proudest victory of its glory.

No boy ever lived who despised effeminate qualities in his sex more than Kit did, but whenever the service of Judy required it he could perform the offices of a maid with incredible delicacy.

He knew a dozen little secrets of her toilet, and took pleasure in seeing that she always performed them to the enhancement of her beauty and her comfort.

He had acquired the knack of arranging her veil to please her. He studied the weather to know what wraps she required. He buttoned her boots. If her head ached and she was tired, he brushed her hair with a soothing hand. And he took the fondest pride in carefully opening the fingers of her new gloves by gently blowing his warm breath into them before she put them on. This last was a special invention of his own which had found much favour in her eyes. He made her the trusted confidante of every secret of his heart, and her judgment on all subjects was as an oracle to him.

And Judy, on her part, paid back this wealth of homage and devotion in equal measure and greater ; for Judy was Kit's fair young mother, and Kit was Judy's all.

Any serious difference of opinion between them was extremely rare, and when—as in the case of Morgan—the possibility of one arose, Kit knew no peace until, to quote himself, he had “had it out” with her.

“It will have to come to it,” he announced to her one day.

“What is it this time, Comfort ?” Whenever Kit appeared particularly troubled Judy called him Comfort. She knew that it flattered

flattered the proudest boast of his little life, and was a bit of strategy which never failed to reassure him.

“Morgan ; he insists on ‘Stub,’ and wants a fight.”

He sat down on the side of her chair, coiled his arm about her neck, and with his round, red cheek resting comfortably against her shoulder, described the situation. Judy acknowledged a thrill of sympathy at the condition of affairs, and agreed to enter no protest against their better adjustment.

His mind at ease respecting her attitude in the matter, his next move was to cultivate the society of a half-dozen doubtful spirits, respected only for their skill in sundry tricks of boyish warfare. With these he held frequent council in the roomy loft of the barn, greatly to the alarm and annoyance of Annie, the beautiful chestnut mare, in the stable below, who was Kit’s particular pride and special property. He had no foolish confidence in his own prowess as opposed to that of the young giant he proposed to lay low, and the purpose of this first step in his plan of action was to make himself master of the honourable science of wrestling—that potent art in serving the ends of agility against amplitude. Becoming familiar, however, with the startling efficacy of certain not altogether legitimate manœuvres of which his youthful instructors were the proud exponents, he found himself possessed at moments of a moral fear lest he should be tempted to resort to similar irregularities with Morgan in case honest means should get the worst of it.

And when, during one unusually exciting session, little Ted Wilson, overhearing an uncomplimentary allusion to himself, suddenly brought his detractors sprawling to earth by a sly play of the tip of his boot, Kit could not control his enthusiasm, but threw up his hat and gave utterance to the most emphatic expression of approval in his vocabulary :

“By

“By Jove ! But that is ripping !”

Annie was not the only member of the family who was puzzled and distressed by Kit's mysterious devotion to the barn loft. Judy had found it impossible to look with full favour upon his, to her, unaccountable devotion to his present associates. It had never been her plan to insist upon any confidence from him until he chose to give it. But for the first time this negative mode of procedure seemed about to fail.

And so, on the morning of a certain May day, observing his impatience to bolt his breakfast and be off to the barn for an interval before school, she determined to follow and to learn as much as she might without positive eavesdropping. When she entered the barn she heard no sound but Annie's familiar whinney. Above in the loft everything seemed quiet. She began to wonder if Kit could be alone, when a heavy sound like the quick falling of an inert body reached her. Kit, mastering a difficult turn, had thrown little Wilson forcibly to the floor. This was followed by shrill yells of approval, and Judy found herself hearing fragments of speech never intended for delicate ears, and of such a nature that for an instant she stood transfixed with angry indignation. Then, without pausing to consider any result but the desirable one of being rid of the young barbarians overhead, she went swiftly to the foot of the stairs, where, in sterner tones than he had ever heard from her, she called him :

“Kit !”

There was no mistaking the meaning in that call. To every boy who had been guilty of an oath or any other contraband expression it meant that she had heard him, and that in her judgment Kit was responsible.

And Kit himself was so bewildered with the surprise of her being there, that for one swift moment he felt almost like a culprit.

This

This state was followed quickly, however, by a series of reflections which left him ill-natured and sullen, and for the first time in his life, disappointed in her.

"She didn't trust me. She sneaked!"

That was his mental summary, and to do him justice it had some show of truth. He stood stubbornly at the head of the stairs waiting for her to call again.

"Kit!"

"Well?"

"I want you."

He walked slowly down, followed by his abashed coadjutors, who lost no time in making their escape. Judy in the meantime had walked over to the stall, where she stood quietly stroking Annie's soft nose. Kit remained by the door watching her, his hands thrust doggedly into his pockets, his hat on the back of his head, and a look of unmistakable mutiny in his eyes. Judy felt that her task was both delicate and difficult.

"I am disappointed, Kit! That language, those boys! What can you see in them?"

He had never known her to manifest so much displeasure at anything before.

"I cannot understand it, Comfort."

A lump came into his throat at the name, but the sense of his disappointment in her still mastered him and kept him silent. At this point the school bell rang. The situation was becoming extreme.

His mother realised it, and waited—devoting herself to Annie, talking softly to her and calling her by the pet names which Kit had invented for her from time to time. But all to no purpose, for when she looked toward the door again he was gone. She could see him disappearing in the direction of the school, his hands

hands still in his pockets, but his hat now was drawn low over his eyes.

"Poor little man!" she sighed. She knew there were tears under the brim.

The mid-day recess did not improve matters. Kit continued to maintain his sullen silence, and this time Judy did not attempt to break it. He found her busy finishing a flannel blouse which she had made for him to wear in some athletic sports that were to take place on the next day. They had modelled this garment between them, and the sight of her thus employed brought up the troublesome lump to his throat again. He made no overture to a peace, however, but finished his meal and hurried back to his lessons. Judy followed him to the door, and watched the little figure out of sight. When he reached the corner whose turning shut him from her view, he looked back and saw her standing there.

"Oh, Judy, Judy!" It was a genuine sob that burst from him as he hastened on.

"Dear, dear little Judy! But she finished the blouse just the same."

Altogether it was proving the most miserable day of Kit's young existence, and he could never look back upon it without a certain degree of suffering.

When school was dismissed, he set out for the athletic grounds with several companions for an hour's final practice against to-morrow's contests. Within hearing distance behind him were Morgan and his cohorts, bound for the same destination and with the same object in view. Kit was bent on excelling to-morrow—partly, to be sure, to outdo the other boys, but more than all just now to make Judy proud of him again. She would be there to see him, seated in the comfortable little phaeton behind Annie.

Indeed,

Indeed, what event had ever taken place in his little life at which she had not been present—and, for the matter of that, Annie, too, provided it had been any function at which a self-respecting horse could appear? After practice he would go home to her and straighten out the wretched affair of the morning, and tomorrow with everything between them smooth and right once more, why— A glad little sigh at the happy prospect was escaping him, when his ears caught an expression from the crowd in the rear that sent the angry blood into his cheeks. He felt his fingers suddenly tingle with a desire to clutch something, and even his sturdy little legs began to tremble with excitement.

Could it be that on this of all days he was to settle scores with the enemy? It flashed upon him that no day could be fitter. His quarrel with Judy, her distress, his own miserable heart-ache—nothing could suit him better than to avenge these, and to accomplish Morgan's downfall in the same hour.

It is in the young male blood to scent battle and to gloat over it; and a significant silence had fallen upon both groups of boys. Kit himself strode on, waiting for the repetition of the attack which he felt would soon come.

"His—mother's—little—Stub!" He heard it drawled forth a second time. The words were Morgan's, and there was a challenge in them. Quicker than it takes to tell it, Kit turned and faced the foe.

"Come on!" It was Morgan who spoke again, but the words were no more than uttered, when, with the rapidity of lightning, out shot a determined little fist in a left lead-off for Morgan's head, instantly followed up by a cut from an equally determined little right. And then, faster and faster, and more and more determined with each succeeding play, now here, now there, first for Judy and then for himself, his blows fell like hail

on face, on head, on ribs ; and Kit seemed transformed into a living incarnation of physical dynamics. In vain did Morgan try to recover himself. Kit realised that it was the opportunity of his fighting career, and at the first return blow he proceeded to put into practice those arts which he had learned from his now deposed trainers. The hold, the heave, the click—it is not to be supposed that he knew them by these technical terms, but he executed them all with an effectiveness that was maddening and bewildering. Morgan would have been glad to cry quits, but nothing would satisfy Kit now but to see him literally in the dust ; and watching his chance he suddenly sprang upon the other's bulky frame, locking himself firmly about his waist by the knees, and with a quick downward and backward movement of his hands and arms, he pulled Morgan's legs from under him and sent him to the ground an inert mass, himself falling with him and literally pinning the young blusterer to earth.

For a few quiet seconds the two combatants eyed each other curiously ; Morgan, still dazed from the concussion of the fall, stared at Kit in a half appealing way, while Kit, burning with excitement and conscious of victory, returned the look with one of calm disdain.

“What is my name now ?”

“K—K—Kit !”

Then he calmly rose—and went home and made his peace with Judy.

II

Need it be told that Kit was a victor in the next day's sports ?

When a boy has thrashed his enemy and become good friends with his mother, who and what can beat him ?

But

But his victory was not an altogether easy one, nor was it an assured one until the very finish. Four lads besides himself—each a winner in at least one previous contest of the afternoon—were pitted against each other for the final affair of the day, a mile walk.

The four were all taller than Kit, with longer legs and capable of greater stride. But he was known among the boys as a stayer. Moreover he possessed the faculty of keeping his wits about him notwithstanding much weariness of the flesh. Frequent practice had made him familiar with every foot of the track. He knew at what turns it declined and where it ascended, and just where over-tired feet would be apt to trip and fall.

The five boys had circled the half-mile course once, and as they passed the judge's stand each one was holding his own. Kit, Neil Morgan, and little Wilson were ahead and abreast, the other two slightly behind. In this order they continued for the next three hundred yards. Then Morgan pushed ahead, lengthening his stride and quickening his pace until he opened an awkward gap between himself and the others. Kit felt keenly the disadvantage of his short legs, but no effort he might make could disarrange geometrical certainties. The base of a triangle could not be made to measure more than the united length of its two other sides. He kept pluckily on, however, side by side with Wilson, neither gaining nor losing until they both reached a point on the track directly across from the grand stand, where for a distance of fifty feet a thicket of willows shut off their small figures from the judge's eyes. When they emerged from behind this screen, Wilson was seen not only in advance of Kit, but leading Morgan also by several feet.

Knowing his opportunity, he had taken advantage of it, and as soon as they were well within the shade of the trees he had broken
into

into a quick run for a space of twenty feet and more. Kit, not altogether surprised by this manœuvre—memories of the barn-loft were still with him—was unmoved by it save for an ominous tightening of the lips and a deepening of the red in his cheeks. But poor Morgan, certain of victory, and over-elated by the safe lead he had honestly won, was so confounded by the vision of Wilson passing him that tears of disappointment blinded him, and he ambled from side to side of the track, thus permitting Kit, doggedly plodding on in a straight line, soon to overtake and pass him.

The fourth and fifth boys having fallen behind, the race now lay between Wilson and Kit. The former, jubilant over the advantage he had unlawfully gained, was swinging along with an air of great confidence, his head well up in the air and his eyes straight ahead. The crowd in the grand stand had already awarded the race to him, Kit's followers no less than the others. Judy, sitting behind Annie over among the carriages at the right of the stand, felt her heart beat a little faster than usual at the prospect of Kit's defeat, but not all her fond ambition could shorten that dangerous lead.

Kit alone had not given up. He kept resolutely on, his eyes fixed on Wilson, and every muscle strained to its utmost. He knew that thirty feet this side of the wire there was a treacherous dip in the track. Twice in practice he had encountered it, and in emerging from it the unexpected rise under his feet had thrown him to the ground. Did Wilson know of it too?

Kit based his one final hope on the answer to this query.

And now the forward boy was directly in the line of the pitfall; nearer and nearer, and still he had given no sign of attempting to avoid it. Kit's anxiety was becoming painful. And now Wilson was within half a dozen paces of the spot. Would he go straight
into

into it ? Would he swerve to the right—to the left ! But even as Kit calculated the chances, the other had reached it. He tripped, he stumbled, he recovered himself. He tripped again, again he stumbled, and with an angry oath which reached Kit's ears and recalled with comical force Judy's shock of yesterday, he fell his full length on the track. By the time he had well regained his footing, Kit had passed him and was under the wire.

Half an hour later Annie was speeding Judy and Kit up the avenue toward home at a rollicking pace. No one knew better than Annie that Kit had won. Indeed, had he not told her so himself as he rubbed his cheek against her nose before climbing in beside Judy ?

"Did you see me get there, old girl ?" And she had replied with a happy and intelligent neigh that she had seen him get there, and was proud of him.

III

The world was not quite right with Annie. Down in the large pleasant pasture field she spent much of her time in sad rumination. She had little else to do these days and might be seen standing for hours at a time with her chin resting lazily on the gate, which shut her in from the highway stretching along by the river. Sometimes Judy stood there too, looking out on the road, with her arm about Annie's neck.

But even Judy's arm could not console her. Perhaps it only served to remind her more forcibly of how sadly she missed from her neck another arm, a smaller one, and two dear little stirrured feet from her sides, and a dear little figure from her back. What a time it seemed since she had felt them. How she longed for a race down the road with that light buoyant weight on her back.

She

She was becoming a veritable sluggard. Were her days of usefulness and activity over? Should he never need her again?

At this point in her daily musing there usually came in sight at the bend of the road the cause of all her dolour. At first it looked each time to Annie like an immense ball rolling very fast. But as it approached it invariably resolved itself into that well-loved and sadly missed little figure mounted on what she felt convinced were two of the phaeton wheels, and working the dear little legs up and down with the vigour and precision of a trip-hammer.

When it came quite in front of them Judy would laugh and clap her hands and cry, "Bravo, bravo," as it sped by. And then Annie, recognising an obligation, would try to toss up her head with her old spirit and to follow with a glad neigh. But the stupidest horse in the world could have seen that she made a miserable failure of it, for there was no gladness in it—more of a sob, if a horse knows anything about a sob.

To come to the point, Kit had surrendered to a bicycle.

Morning, noon, and night, for the past two months, it had absorbed every spare hour. There had been a rather difficult argument with Judy at the first, but having once yielded, she became as enthusiastic a partisan as Kit himself. It was a distinguishing trait in her that she entered into every experience of his with as much active interest as though the experience were her own. She speedily made herself an authority, therefore, on gearing, and adjustment, and saddles, and pedals, and all the rest, that he might enjoy an advantage at every point. She took the keenest pride in his riding. It was not enough that he could make the best time and the longest distance; he must be the best to look upon as well. And so she devised the trimmest of costumes and the neatest of caps. And he must sit correctly and he must pedal properly, until, taking it all in all, Kit's bicycle period

period developed into the most engrossing one yet known to either himself or to Judy.

And in the meantime Annie continued sad and neglected. Joe, the stable-boy, noticing her moping condition, said one day to Kit :

“'Pears like she don't feel first rate.”

Then Kit went into the stall where Joe was grooming her and rubbed her nose and talked to her.

“You are getting proud, old girl, and lazy. That is all that ails you. That ‘bike’ is the greatest friend you ever had. You can take it easy now for the rest of your natural life—a nice comfortable pasture, plenty to eat, and nothing to do. Oh, you lucky old lady ! Give her a bran-mash, Joe ; that will put her all right.” And he was gone.

Annie's soft brown eyes followed Kit's figure up the lane with an appealing look. A bran-mash ? What was a bran-mash to a faithful old friend, whose only illness was a longing for the baby boy who eight years before had first been put astride her back and who every day since, until these last miserable weeks, had fondled her and ridden her and driven her ?

How should she ever make him understand ?

Was a mere machine to supplant a lifetime's devotion ?

Her friend, indeed ! She would not have answered for that friend's safety had it been just then within reach of two well-shod hoofs. Nothing to do for the rest of her natural life ! There was the rub. She had always been such a necessary member of the family—so willing, so proud of her usefulness ! And now, in the very hey-day of her powers, to be cast aside ! Had she failed to carry him fast enough ? She would challenge any wheel made to beat her. Had she ever rebelled at distance or time ? Never ! And yet—and yet—— No more mad rides down the river bank !

No

No more racing! No more wild charges home from the park, passing everything on the road, with Judy and Kit sitting proudly behind her! No more all-day rambles through woods and along the lake! No more of anything that was!

Annie's heart was as heavy as a horse's heart could well be; heavy, and a little indignant as well. Accordingly, when Joe following instructions, placed the bran-mash in the measure before her, she tipped it over with a viciousness never before seen in her and resolutely refused to take it.

But that was her one and only offence. From that day she bore ills with the dignity of a dethroned monarch; and if Kit's neglect wounded her, she only betrayed it by an added gentleness to him on those now rare occasions when he remembered her.

And so the bright summer slipped away, and October with its mellow fulness was at hand.

Judy, always more or less influenced by that subtle melancholy of the autumn, was this year particularly affected by it. It was a singular trait of Kit's almost passionate affection for her, that whenever she was ill he bore himself toward her with something almost approaching harshness. It seemed to be his only method of pulling himself together against a nameless horror which any lack of her accustomed force always suggested to him. He could not look back to the time when that horror had not played a part in his thought of her. On that never-to-be-forgotten first day of his school-life, when his little feet had raced home to her and she had caught him to her heart after their first few hours' separation, his first cry had been:

"Oh, Judy, Judy! I was afraid I might not find you here!"

And that had been the unspoken fear of all his home-comings ever since. Afraid he might not find her! And this fear had
grown

grown and grown, and made riot in his imagination until every tiny ill to which she became subject developed into a possible monster of evil. One day a spark from the grate had caught in her dress and burned it. When he came from his lessons she laughingly told him of it, and for days after he had been almost afraid to go into that same room to look for her, lest he should find that a second spark had accomplished more ghastly results. Again, an irritation in her throat had produced a violent fit of coughing, and he had seen a speck of blood upon her handkerchief. Thereupon the horror took a new form, and for weeks he endured the agony of a new suspense. His bedroom was just across the passage from hers, and she, dreaming one night, had called out in her sleep. Wakened by her voice, he had rushed to her, only to find her lying white and peaceful. But the sight had so suggested that other "dreamless sleep," that, awe-stricken, he had fled back to his own room, where he had locked himself in and sobbed the night away. And after this for many weeks, in spite of her entreaties, he closed his door at night and refused her the solace of calling across to him, as was her wont, until she fell asleep—for Judy disliked solitude and the dark. But his moist pillow had the same story to tell every morning.

And Judy never knew.

It was his one secret from her. He found it easier to be misunderstood, than to put the horror in words, and chose rather to appear hard and sullen to her than to yield to it in her presence.

So it happened that on a particular day of this particular October, coming into her room and finding her lying on her bed, pale and weak, his heart suddenly leaped to his throat in an agony of suffering, but he only said :

"I cannot think why you lie about such a fine day, Judy. You would be much better out of doors."

And

And Judy answering that she felt a bit tired and ill, he abruptly left her—but only to linger outside her door heart-broken, hollow-eyed, and afraid. Later, when the doctor came, he comforted Kit and smiled at his anxious questions. His mother was sure to be all right in the morning. But Kit, with the keen prescience of intense affection, realised that she was as she had never been before. When night came, he stole quietly in to her and put his cheek against hers, but he could not trust himself to speak. Then he crept back to his own room, where he threw himself upon the bed, fully dressed, to wait for the morning. Before many hours had passed, however, a cry of pain aroused him :

“Kit! Kit!” He was at her side in a bound. “The doctor, Kit! I cannot breathe.”

In looking back at it afterwards he never could remember how he found his cap or how he got out of doors. His first distinct consciousness was when he found himself on the road in front of the house mounted on his bicycle and starting on what seemed to him a race against time for Judy’s life. What words can describe the tension of his feelings? All the accumulated suffering of that awful fear was at work within him. How he flew! What time he made from the start! Old Doctor Morton lived four miles down the river—but before he could strike the river road he must go a mile in the opposite direction, and then half as far again to the right. That mile and a half seemed a mile and a half of treason to Judy. But on, on, on—even while he was deploring it, he had accomplished it. And now he had turned into the smooth highway, running along by the river bank, and following Annie’s pasture for a quarter of a mile. Little thought of Annie, however, was in his mind to-night—little thought of anything but Judy and speed. The road, the trees, the moon,

the fences, even the blades of grass, seemed all to whisper her name—Judy—Judy !

He remembered with a peculiar sense of thankfulness that he had spent an hour that very day in putting his wheel in condition. He had cleaned it, and oiled it, and pumped it, and every screw had been made tight and fast. And now, with head well forward and feet firmly working, he braced himself for his quick and noiseless flight. Almost unconsciously to himself he began to calculate the time he was making—how long it would take to reach the doctor, the delay there, the return. An hour should accomplish it all and find him back with her again. What gratitude he felt for this sure, silent steed he was riding ! No loss of time in saddling and bridling ! A horse was all very good when one had time, but not even Annie with all her speed could equal this quiet, swift carrier that had supplanted her. A sense of exultation mingled with his anxiety for Judy, as he realised how quickly he could bring aid to her. His hand resting easily on the bars, his body inclining farther and farther forward, his speed increased at every revolution. It seemed to him that wings could not have borne him faster. A mile ! Another quarter ! He knew every inch of the way. Another half ! Here was Annie's pasture ! How he was going it ! How Annie would prick up her ears if she could see his pace ! And then—snap ! A sound like the report of a pistol and Kit's steed had failed him. Too tightly pumped for his mad haste, a tire had exploded. He was on his feet in a flash and studying the situation. He looked at the flattened, useless wheel—he thought of Judy's plight, and for one weak moment all his strength forsook him. Down on his face he threw himself in an abandonment of suffering, and in one long, loud sob cried out his anguish :

“Oh, Judy ! Poor, poor little Judy !”

But

But hark ! His sob was not fully spent, when he lifted his head with a throb of returning hope. Could he believe his ears ? Whose friendly voice had he heard ring out on the night in answer to his cry ? With a shout he sprang to his feet, and called aloud. Again that welcome response, followed now by the sound of hurrying steps he knew so well.

"It is ! It is ! Annie, Annie, Annie !" He had not been deceived. He was over the fence like a ball, and down at the gate as fast as his feet could carry him, calling in half-sobs as he ran :

"Annie, Annie, old girl ! Hurry ! Hurry ! It's for Judy, Annie—it's for Judy !" And in shorter time than pen can write it, he was on her bare back and away.

What need to explain ?

Annie, nibbling the night away under the moon, in the pasture, had been startled from her pensive meditation by that heart-breaking cry of her young master. Catching its note of despair, like the loyal servant that she was, she had lifted her voice in loud, quick, sympathetic response.

A neighbour was heard to say, the following day : "That mare of Bryce's whinnied like she wanted to wake up the whole town last night."

As to Annie herself, she could not guess what catastrophe had brought Kit to her in such distress at this hour of the night, but she felt intuitively that the vindication of the entire equine race might depend upon her speed. With his hands gripped firmly on her neck, and his knees pressed well into her sides, Kit held his breath at the pace she set. On, on like the wind ! And the clatter of her hoofs played good part too, for, long before the house was reached, their sound had struck Doctor Morton's keen ears like a call to duty, and brought him to the door before Kit had turned into the yard.

"She

"She is worse, doctor. You are to come—come at once !"

Then they raced back, and the old doctor mounted on his tall, raw-boned gray, came in no mean second.

When the morning broke it found Judy better. Relief had come to her at a critical moment, and an awkward crisis was safely passed.

A week later, almost herself again, she and Kit stood by the drive, while Joe led out Annie, harnessed to the little phaeton.

"She is a proud steppin' beast, Master Kit—and no mistake—and have more spirit than a two-year-old."

"Yes, Joe ; you are right."

When Judy was comfortably seated, and her cushions properly placed, Kit sprang in by her side and took the reins.

"What have you done about that tire, Joe ?"

"Mended it, sir."

"Well—I am rather off wheeling for the present. The thing is yours, if you like. I shan't want it again. Here ! mind yourself, old girl. What are you up to ?"

But Annie could not help it. With a snort of triumph she dashed down the drive and out into the road, and refused to be reined up until she had gone a mad mile or two.

Later, Kit explained :

"A wheel is right enough for sport, Judy, but you can't count on anything in trouble that doesn't know how to feel. Annie is good enough for me."

Forgetfulness

By R. V. Risley

FRIEND, the years to you have been Autumnal, and when the war-horns of life are filled with dust you will not be frightened at the silence. Do you still feel the want for remembrance, the horror of the future's indifference? Do the faded figures experience has woven into the tapestry of your days still keep a reality for you that makes you sad to leave them? Do you dread the cold dark and the changelessness of oblivion?

For some lives the world is a waste of every-days that are all accounted for by mean causes and are useless and without a significant great end. And some lives are for ever haunted by an unattainable triumph that is for ever a little beyond—and beyond. But you have been interested in things as a sad, wise man, and yet have heard no loud ambition calling. A nature that realises sadness is never expressive, and its depths exist in silence and hide away from men. So, your life has been on the defensive, and in your isolation you have been mournfully unprotected against dreams. Your instinct of knowledge allowed you illusive consolations, and loneliness, the loneliness that dwells upon the altitudes, the loneliness of a wise mind, interpreted mankind to you.

Hope is God's jest and Memory His curse : but Indifference is
His

His blessing. And you have lived indifferent, but kind from a great pity ; and you have not been angry with men.

Some souls move through the world to soft sounds, but some, more wildly strong, sweep through the years with uproar and endeavour. But the tune of your life has been silence, which is the divinest harmony when understood in love.

If the unnumberable voices of the world's years live and echo everlastingly around the globe, I wonder whether they result in a mighty music huge with the accumulated cries of ages. Or do they drown away into the unbroken silence of the distances between the stars? I wonder which is the more awful and pitiful.

You have gazed from your isolation at the alien years as they trod unevenly past, and have seen how men must turn away from the faces of their old ideals, never looking back, lest former thought-friends become sad, as former world-friends, at re-meeting. Ideals are cruel in that they change, and the reason we pity them is because they cannot help being cruel to us. So, we constantly remove further along the paths of wonder, leaving the old places and levels empty. But time to you does not seem to progress, because you yourself do not change, and the moods of the years do not entice you.

You have seen how in these days men search for laughter, the slighted jester-angel too wayward for long attendance. Sick of the ache for truth, we turn to amusement to soothe the eternal disappointment. But we must woo laughter, and delicately practise it just enough, and entice it, for the hands of our minds are become awkward with work and their gentle touch is gone. But you have found laughter ready to your call, for your mind has remained sensitive in solitude.

You have seen how a spirit of discontent drives us, and how
weary

weary we are, and you have seen our sorrow in the age's dissolution, that man can not reverse time's glass when the sands run out. But you have not found music enough in the world's applause to care to listen for it, and you are so sad that you have become friendly with fatigue.

Oh, my friend, is there anything piteous like the piteousness of life, life that stretches its hands to the empty sky and says—"I came from yonder, take me back again"? And old Hope has blind beautiful eyes and smiles, and Sorrow's eyes are deep with sight, and she is always young.

Are you so spiritual that you feel the pain of the world's look? Does it see more than the reflection of itself? The world is a great dreamer though it credits only its exceptions with its dreams.

Facts and reasons we acquire and leave off again, their use dead. Experience is impersonal, only our applications of it become any kin to us. Time fades out of us the distinctness of old things, merging them in association in his shadow—reason's right is mixed with living's wrong, and what has stood large and plain is fore-shortened into dimness in the years; it is events that stretch the spaces in memory. We know only the midway of things and the beginnings and endings are in the dark; for man's knowledge is a lantern that he himself carries and the light falls round him. All this the world knows is true.

But when we hear youth calling, and, turning our heads, find that we are old, we take a landscape view of life, and we realise that our light has been the light of dreams, and with the puny lantern of our wisdom we have been groping in an unknown country and have not seen the sun.

Life tyrannises over us; ambition leads us on for ever after the illusive music of success played by the eternal invisible minstrels.

We

We burden our gods with useless prayers, and God is cruel when only His silence answers; or we pass our lives singing our consciences to sleep with excuses, its lullabies.

We are founded on dreams and greatly planned, but we are smaller-minded architects than nature, and have built every-day dwellings on the foundations of palaces.

The grassless path of generations still is resonant with the echo of ringing feet, now resting—the feet of the men whose minds struck a sharp note through the monotony of the years. But I think that beside the great ones there walk silently men as great, men who do not care so much for expression and whose souls sing to themselves alone.

Silence is master of spirits, but we must speak to him in a tongue of great emotions that we are not often cursed with the memory of. For silence to let loose his legions of thoughts upon us, we must be in the extreme to receive them, else they become silence again. So we rush to sound, and as noise is the standard of our importance, so music is that of our beauty.

Among men of keen senses the gate of the emotions most easily hinged is the gate of harmonious sound. Their souls are like guitar-boards—responsive innately to the running of the notes overhead. But in some men Nature's dulling thumb rests upon the high strings of their souls, her slow fingers touching only the bass chords of their heavy reason, drawing flat notes and level.

Surely our minds have many strings, and the harmony becomes a monotony by the twanging of any one of them. Surely it is the philosophy of the utter philosopher to spoil no harmony, though the vanity we call truth make a truthful discord. For when vanity has laid her painted hand upon our eyes we prate of truths we never saw before.

But you, my friend, are cursed with too clear sight in men—the

the cold sight, not like the tinged vision of the enthusiast. You have not the blessing of credulity, that soothing hand that strokes keen thought to slumber. Surely men whose sharp perception has never been corroded with the rust of reverence see too finely to be ever quite content. And contentment is what we strive for by many strange, sad paths, trod out by the tired feet of former men.

One man's self holds many natures, some of them sleeping: perhaps we should be much alike could we ever be quite awake. And to be content is the result alone of that which we never practise nor give care to—our own natures. We live eager after exterior things, and try to yield to what is acquired the place of that which we boast is everlasting and cannot be acquired—our personality. But this unnoticed possession sits on a shadowy throne that cannot be usurped, and our noisy every-days pass over it like foam on deep water.

Once a story grew into a reality in my mind in the years, the story of an Indian beyond the Father of Waters. He grew mad and followed after the setting sun in its smoky crimson. But the place where it touched the earth receded and for ever receded across the plains, and the shadows grew suddenly out of the nowhere where they wait eternally. The gaunt hunter followed across the rolling lands and over the mountains, till, after many months, the ocean touched his hard feet. The strangers who watched from the shore saw his canoe lessen down the fiery path of the sunset, become small, very tiny, disappear into the sad last light; and the sun went down, and the dusk came, and the night came.

This is sad to you and me, for there is disappointment in it and ecstasy of too high ideals.

A boy walks in a cathedral, sacred and silent, in the city of reality. All round him rise the statues of his ideals, memorable and

and prophetic. Some day he goes out into the city to listen to its voices. And when he tires of the voices and enters again into the quiet cathedral, a very old man, the statues are all fallen down from their pedestals, and he walks among their ruins where he walked many years before.

Thus we hear the voices of thoughts calling, insistent, incomprehensible. They call to us in appeal, their questioning livens the dark—not only the voices of the shapes that we have passed within the staunch reality of the day, but the voices of the shapes that outnumber these, the shapes of loneliness and disillusion, and the wordless voices of those two are terrible. Our reveries are importuned by the past and the future, by that eternal future that we will not forget, by that eternal past that we cannot forget.

What else is there worth living or learning or laughing for, but forgetfulness? Expedient forgetfulness! Old successes come to be standards against our failures, old energies against our new fatigues; old happy moods become slight-pained regrets, and age laughs sadly at unwise, dear youth. Men swerved in the all-desire to forget, embrace oblivion, and they are wise. Forgetfulness is a blessing, like the blessing of whole-hearted, unwearied laughter to a world-tired man.

But, my friend, thoughts, too sad thoughts, have dulled the world to the shade of ashes and disappointment, and we are become old too young. There are autumn leaves in the bowls of our spirits, withered flame of bright colour. We have lived too much with books, and books eat out a man's youth; a spell of other days and other lives winds him in the melodious woof of dreams, and modern thoughts drown and die away in the unnoticed sound of modern years. To such minds the stones that bore the tops of history's heels are not mere paving-stones, and in all places where
men

men have thought great thoughts invisible cathedrals erect themselves where understanding worships.

Books pursue us through the long avenues of days that are not our own.

He bows unalertly, Mephistopheles. He is always tired, and he never quite convinces us, this German allegory of the ancient evil.

It is our dangerous friend Paul, of the subtle mind in debate, Paul the thistle-down-tongued, who spoke fetters aside.

It is the gentleman whom we know through the imagination of that Spaniard of whom we know so little. His blade peeps and his stocking is darned with a differing coloured silk. He stands, the wittiest, wisest, realest, maddest of mankind, cursed with a Sancho who has blessed us ever since—he bends and bows grave welcome.

The brittle laughter or the elastic cares of life find no response in the ceremonious welcome of their greeting.

Men leave us, and moods depart, and perhaps hurt memory at re-meeting; but books have no unkindness, and it is we who change. Friends force on us their content, or exhibit their woes as sign-boards to say our laughter trespasses on life. But books gravely await our coming and are our hospitable hosts entertaining the moods of us, their guests.

The better a book is the better it could be, yet it is a good book that for centuries can uphold reputation's incessant challenge, for it is more difficult to bear a reputation than to make it.

Now, our hurried days seldom admit of the building of a great fortress-book—our strong books are only outworks around literature. We are tired with eccentricity, the cheapest apology for originality. We are ashamed of the nakedness of sincerity and deal in transient things—from the shades no wail immortal of sad Orpheus ascends from his interminable search.

You,

You, my friend, see books from the standpoint of men, knowing men too well. Sorrow sees deep and is kind, and you know men yet you care for them. Yet surely it is more easy to feel friendly towards nations, for History is a cold-voiced minstrel, and her nonsense seems unhuman, and her griefs and laughter come from very far away.

People are like the weather. Some discourage us into departure for sunnier climates by their overcoat faces, some soothe us into resistance by their long-drawn content, till our levelled senses ache for a discord, but these are sordid, stupid men the temples in whose minds were built with closed doors; and the stupid man is his own contentment, as a great man is his own destiny.

A few cold winds have lifted voices sweet with the chill, pure wonder of the dawning air, and have spoken of the creations of their minds and called them loves. We have not such loves. Some men are blessed with never finding out that ideals live only in the ideal. The little door of Heaven does not turn on its hinges of light to our knocking, and only a ray of the luminous beyond steals out to us under its threshold.

A few men whose minds are dark with sorrows and whose laughers are all asleep have spoken in huge, soft organ tones, and made the world colder in the shadow of their everlasting pain as when a great berg passes by on the ocean in the dark.

But we cannot live upon the altitudes; our minds seek the balance of the valleys, and in our life's ending we see that the sum of the year's exaltations and depressions is nearly a level, and feel that it is well if our path has inclined but a little upward.

All great thoughts are sad because they are lonely, and there are only two whole, lonely joys, that of creation and that of destruction.

We try for distinction from the men about us, and our minds
become

become stages where our whims dance to the world's amusement. The various moods of our lives colour our souls with shades of impression, till memory in the years becomes tinged like the fiery afternoon woods in the autumn.

But loneliness is colourless, and remains as a shadow, for ever breeding strength. It is only in loneliness that a soul becomes defensive, as it is only in the silence of a great tragedy that it becomes impregnable. The growth of deep power in a mind implies a shady place aside from the surface sunlight of the day's events, a secret city in one's nature away from the noises of exterior happenings.

I know a story of a man who became divine in loneliness one night on the long sand, where the solemn thought of the sea spoke in a whisper. But afterwards he could not express the divinity he had understood, but he laughed his way through life to no tense purpose among the every-days. Once the midnight questioned him in the Fall of the year, and he answered that he had become a part of that divinity and could not speak. Surely all of us have one time understood a divinity that eludes expression. We feel it possible to be our best, but the harmony of our souls is broken by the discords of life, which demand loudly, and give no care to the hesitating depths of thought that stand always upon the threshold. Perhaps we are all the trumpets of the Deity, but we cannot speak what the invisible lips have breathed into our being. Possibly we are all beautiful each with a self beauty of our own, only circumstance spoils us.

We see this more easily in looking at the organised crowds of prejudices called Nations.

Nations die, some violently, struggling against outward causes, and their fall is noticed, making a page of battles in history; some slowly, and like a very old man, and their end comes as a transition,

transition, leaving a sentence as an epitaph. Sometimes the course of nations crimson at their setting, sometimes it fades like a twilight. A man being thought of as one, and as of a single impressiveness, his loss passes on with him and with him is forgotten, but a nation being a union of many voices becomes suddenly impressive when it breaks, the voices scattering. Nations roar to their finish, or change and grow indistinct as when one river joins another.

Death is always a tragedy because of its possibilities—perhaps it is change, perhaps oblivion, and the former is the more tragical, for when things change away and confute memory by dissemblance it is more pitiful than when they fall, becoming memories.

Sometimes nations die of their own satisfaction, and the strength grown vigorous in combating adversity sinks into listlessness in their ease; so, they decline of their own content, and die, like over-feeding men in an after-dinner mood.

Race, which is below nations, rests unseen for the reason of the silence, yet when, in its time, this deeper vitality that evolves nations, speaks, methods of rule are powerless, and governors seem insignificant.

When that great captive animal we call a people roars its fatigue the voices of the trainers are lost; when race grows feeble and old, the noise of government sinks into complaining.

Surely history, who was born old, is very tired, tired with the fatigue of the ages and their unoriginality, tired and sick, and sorrowful with knowledge of men. She has been so long ring-master in the circus of the generations, watching their ceaseless round to the cracked old music of the years, God must seem very cruel to her.

You feel the balancing of the centuries very delicately, my friend, and their results are finely weighed in your understanding,
for

for your mind is sensitive to the characteristics of peoples, to the huge racial tones too large to be hurriedly heard. You know the roar of the ways of men, its sum and its insignificance. And, like God, in understanding man's fallibility you pardon it.

There are so few strong men. The strong man, self-willed and of no reverence, uses himself as a sledge, of which his will is handle, and bangs out the glowing shapes of his mind on the anvil of the world; he can look into the empty skies and tell his gods that he enjoys their life because he is their creator.

The wise man may be a fool in all but other men's gathered wisdom. The renowned man is a strange waster of the hours when he slights loud reputation. The fool may find his folly, in the end, applies to more of the world's days than does the hesitation of the overlearned mind.

But the strong deep man of modernity rests firm in self-reliance and command, and is not malleable; and he knows that he is strong. Egotism is a wageless labourer who begins our greatest works for us, and when our completions justify his grand beginnings we are as great as he whom we slighted is. A great man always has great egotisms. But modernity has given man a new sorrow, fatigue of man. We wonder which outbalances this weariness, and ingratitude, and sickness, and loss of companions, or laughing, the dear vanity of loving, careless thoughts, and the boisterous wills of the animal. Sometimes we have been hurried through these fancies when old moods hurt us, or when illness gave us tired knowledge of the persistent angles of a room. Time is tired of us, and we are tired of time.

Each of us walks with a companion called delusion towards whom we some day turn, and when we look into his face we see that we have been walking with a voice, an air, a mere reflection of ourselves, that only our love has warmed into the semblance of life.

life. We are come from the country of youth where life cried with a sound as of triumph in the morning ; now the valleys of evening hold us ; our energy glows dully in the ashes of fatigue ; and the wonderful voices of the dawn are whispers in the twilight of our lives.

My friend, you know great cynicism, too sad to be trivial, and an indifference born of fatigue ; but there is one thing that rests.

There is one pure emotion for man on earth, one huge, simple thing that expression shrinks from, that noise shuns, that the days slight. It slights, and shuns, and shrinks from being known. It does not feel the want of pity, for it is beautiful in an everlasting strength, and with the indifference beyond sorrow. This is hate.

Hate is a quiet giant who never explains himself to weak men. Anger, exasperation, envy, and jealousy pass by him unnoticed, and he sits brooding with an animosity that is too deep to stoop to revenge. He hopes that the soul he hates may know it, though, some day.

Exasperation fades from distance of time or place, and anger is as short-lived as a fire. We cannot remain faithful in these things. As the years of our life pass by, and we learn how pitiful things are, as time teaches us our vanity, and thought becomes bounded in thinking, memory draws back to the years that are gone, and joins the shadows of our ancient selves that lag behind us. But great hate, the hate that we have met upon the way and have looked into the eyes of, which so walks on with us for ever—this admits of no anger, no exasperation, no tirades, or curses. Its nature is silence and it shall not be forgotten.

Men are many-doored houses, and the visitors to our natures depart. But beyond the gaudy drawing-rooms, decorated with
our

our best and least loved, there rests a sanctuary that strangers do not enter ; and here is such hate in place.

Envy is the slim rapier, and the more we handle it the lighter it feels to our grasp. It is a delicate weapon and prolific of imagination. Yet, once dropped, the cunning feel of the blade leaves us, and its fickle laugh looks whimsical, not formidable, along the ground.

Anger is sudden, or, like the storm long gathering, breaks in thunder and crooked lightning, that runs jagged over the face of the tumult, while our disturbed senses hurry across the lighter skies of our natures like clouds.

Exasperation is physical, the itch inside the thumb, the transient wish for suffering. Like a dog growling, or the Arab stabbing up between the bloody hoofs, we turn the gaze back to savagery, and with a shrug cast off the painted blanket of our civilisation. Then our arms are free, and we crouch and are dangerous.

Jealousy, the much maligned, yet a man's quality, and more tragic than funny, is much, in minds hard of trust. The jealous have been laughed at as buffoons and all their sadness missed, for it is long before some men trust and belief comes struggling ; yet once seated the fall of mountains is insignificant. Jealousy prompts men to rash deeds and often repented, yet it is but a winding path and it leads to a stronghold.

But great hate ; not dependent upon circumstances, not an elation nor a depression, unstorming, barren, lasting and unproductive—few natures have the silence to harbour it. Silence is the home of great emotions who feel the hopelessness of words. All great speech has broken silence, the noises scare it, and it remains underground ; only it comes forth in the stillness of the night like the elves and flies at the trivial tread of the light. In

such silence hate lives and draws its everlasting, imperceptible breaths.

Great places or great deeds can lift little men to their level, but hate is not violent and requires great men.

And there is a love in hate and a contentment ; a love of itself, and a contentment in its own existence. In the years it becomes a dear possession to a man as progressing with him, and its fidelity makes it firm-placed, and cared for as something to be trusted.

Nothing can so lift a thoughtful man in his own eyes as the realisation that something in his nature is faithful to him. For fidelity is the most nobly human of all qualities and a man faithful to himself the strongest of men.

So great hate becomes dear in the changes as something remaining beyond all things. Great hate and great love are pair, but love is the feminine and the most beautiful and is unhuman ; while great hate is a man and its strength is earth-strength, not like the woman's.

Hate also is unthoughtful, being thought, for the action of thinking implies levels, but hate rests quiet, and is almost forgotten. Memory is fickle, and a man must woo constantly or she becomes indifferent. Hate may drowse into sleep. Memory as often implies struggle as calm and sadness is her companion. But great hate is quiescent and can smile in its sure fidelity.

All large thoughts lift us on invisible wings broadening our horizon, yet make us sadder as seeing further ; the gods must be very sad from so far on high. A man of little thoughts can understand grief, but never sadness or sorrow. Thus great hate brings a man's position in self-command, and gives him sight in the distance.

And large thoughts remove a man so far out of the trivial,
wailing

walling him apart from other men. And thus great hate gives a man distinction, as being individual, and not only relative as most of us are.

Great loves do not see oblivion, trusting through it, but great hate, not of God, but of the nature below our feet, has neither care nor trust, its existence being sufficient for its satisfying.

It leads in sleep the jangling emotions of the earth, while love stands by.

Lucy Wren

By Ada Radford

A GREY scholarly little person. She had no degree, but her testimonials were unusual. She would be an acquisition to any staff. Refined, cultivated, literary in her tastes, and above all thoroughly conscientious and reliable.

And so although her health and her means had allowed her to do comparatively little in preparation, and although she was beginning later than some women, Lucy Wren found herself teaching in a large school, with a salary of £95 a year, and a prospect of a rise of £5 at the end of the year.

She was very fortunate ; she recognised the fact, although she did not give thanks for it quite as often as her friend Katharine Grey, with whom she lived.

They sat one summer evening, exercise-books for correction piled in front of them.

"Our life," said Katharine, "is so delightfully free. Think of being a governess in a family."

Yes, Lucy Wren had been saved from that.

"Imagine being one of those girls in an idle rich family, with nothing to think about except dress and flirtations."

Her healthy-minded brisk little comrade shuddered at the thought.

Yes,

Yes, she had been saved from that.

She thought little of clothes, although the soft grey dress she wore, made beautiful lines over her slight figure. And flirtations ! . . . All the satisfaction there is to be gained from having no flirtations was hers, and yet somehow she wished that Katharine would give her mind to her exercise-books, instead of sitting there thanking heaven that they were not as other women.

"I don't believe you would have lived long in a life of that kind," Katharine said, looking at her broad quiet brow and long sensitive hands. "It's impossible to imagine you without work and without a purpose."

"I confess there was a time when I liked a little of it ; a little, you know."

Lucy Wren smiled and asked, "Of which ? of dress, or of flirtation ?"

"Both I think," and the blue and red pencil remained idly balanced in Katharine's fingers, and the picture of good sense grew pensive.

"I always feel that it has been knowing you that has made me look at things differently. After I knew you things seemed almost vulgar, that before I had thought only fun. In fact there are things I've never dared confess to you ; they are nothing much, but I don't think you'd ever quite forgive or understand."

Lucy did not protest that she would, and so no confidence was given.

"I shan't get through these books if you will talk," was what she said, and she opened an exercise-book.

"That child's mind is a perfect chaos," she murmured as she wrote "Very poor work" across the page at the bottom.

Katharine had an unusual desire to talk ; she fidgeted, and at last, finding Lucy absolutely unresponsive she left the table and her unfinished

unfinished work, and sitting in the horsehair easy chair, leant back, a volume of Browning in her hand.

When at last Lucy looked up, Katharine spoke at once.

"It's a glorious love poem," she said ; her eyes shone, and the schoolmistress had disappeared. "Shall I read it to you?"

To listen to a glorious love poem read by Katharine, at any time required the same kind of composure as the dentist's chair, but to-night had she proposed to let loose the specimens of animal life she kept in bottles and boxes, all over the room, Lucy would have given the same involuntary shudder.

"My head aches so, I must go to bed; good night," she said firmly, and leaving her half-finished books on the table, she left the room, with what for her were rapid movements.

"Good night," said Katharine, and buried herself again in her book.

* * * * *

"I know you'll be very angry," said Katharine the next afternoon, as Lucy stood in her hat and cloak ready to go out, "but I never can understand your friendship with that little Mrs. Dawson. She doesn't seem to me to have a thing in her."

Lucy smiled.

"And you frighten the very little she has out of her; but I—well, I like to go and hear about things outside the school."

"But it's all gossip, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's all gossip."

"How funny of you, Lucy. What kind of man is her husband?"

"We never get more than a few words together," said Lucy. Then she added. "He looks unhappy."

It was gossip, and yet Lucy listened. Ella (Mrs. Dawson's name was Ella) always apologised. "I know these things don't interest you,"

you," she said, "but then after all you get quite enough of clever people," and so she talked and Lucy listened, and learnt many things—to-day as usual. For instance :

If Ella were Mrs. Spooner, she wouldn't like her husband to spend so much of his time with Ethel Dayley. Not that she should be jealous, of course ; jealousy is a small feeling, and would show distrust in Tom ; still she should distinctly dislike it. "It depends so much on the woman," she said, and looking in a kindly way at Lucy, whose tired head was resting against the back of her chair, she added : "Now I shouldn't mind Tom being friends with you. But it isn't always safe."

A vision of Ethel Dayley rose before Lucy, and she understood that she was the safer.

Then she heard that Sophie Warren was engaged to marry a man years and years younger than herself. That his people were furious. That Ella herself thought it very wrong of Sophie.

Didn't Lucy think it a wrong thing to do ?

"I don't know," said Lucy.

"But imagine yourself in such a position."

"I can't," said Lucy.

With even so much encouragement Ella chatted and chattered.

"People think I'm older than Tom, but really I'm a week younger ; and I've always been so glad that it wasn't the other way, for people can say such nasty things if a woman's older than her husband."

"I wish Tom would come in," she said suddenly.

Lucy wished it too. She was not as good a listener to-day as usual.

"He likes so few of my friends," Ella sighed, "and when he doesn't like them, although he doesn't mean to be rude, he hardly speaks to them. He always has something to say to you. Really
Tom

Tom ought to have married a clever woman ;” and Ella mentally determined to read more, in case Tom took to talking to her ; but it is hard to work with such a remote end in view.

When Tom came he was very quiet, and Ella was disappointed.

“How very tired you look,” he said, fixing his eyes on Lucy’s face, as he gave her some tea.

“I am, very,” said Lucy.

“Oh, I’m so sorry,” broke in Ella, “you never told me. Why ever didn’t you tell me ? And here I’ve been chattering and chattering, and you ought to have been on the sofa, quite quiet, with your feet up. Do put them up, now. Tom won’t mind, will you, Tom ?”

Ella was in such a charming little fuss that Tom and Lucy exchanged a smile.

“Fancy not telling me !” said Ella.

They smiled again. “To tell Ella you are tired,” the smile said, “is just putting a match to a dear little feminine bomb.” Lucy pacified Ella, then she looked at Tom again, and the smile died out of her face. She understood now Ella’s constant complaint that he never talked. Talk ! How could he ? And she ? Why had she spent so much time with Ella, week after week ?

Only because she was dead tired and only half alive, that was all ; but Tom was, and had to be, with her always.

* * * * *

A leaden sky, a leaden river. Lucy stopped and looked over the bridge. In the river there was a just perceptible movement, in the sky a suppression that promised a storm, and, for who could look so far ahead, freshness after it.

Lucy thought of Katharine’s cheerful companionship and the cup of cocoa awaiting her, and still she lingered.

“Low spirits are mostly indigestion,” Katharine had said ;
Katharine,

Katharine, who was never original, but who threw down her commonplaces and let them ring.

Good sense, good sense.

Hadn't even Lucy nearly enough of it? Wasn't she earning her own living? Wasn't she saving a few pounds for her own enjoyable old age? Wasn't she frugal and quiet and hard-working, as any woman of the working classes? And this discontent that surged within her when she felt strong, that dragged at her spirits and clouded her brain when she was tired—it was just unreasoning womanish folly, and Katharine would say indigestion. Was it? Very well.

To-night she would not make the usual effort to throw it off. "I mustn't, I mustn't," she had always thought; "I shan't be fit for my work to-morrow." And resolutely she had turned and interested herself in some light book. To-night, in the leaden dulness, rebellion stirred.

"Good heavens! Haven't I even the right to be wretched!"

Her work constantly overtaxed her strength. Economy prevented her from getting proper rest in her holidays. But she was sensible, and rested all she could, so that although always tired and draggled, she might not be noticeably so, and lose her post.

That was the comfort common sense gave.

She looked forward. She would never get a head mistress-ship, she had neither the acquirements nor the personality; and year after year young girls came up with their degrees and their inexperience, and after a time—it was years yet—but after a time, perhaps before she was forty, she would be told she was too old to teach.

Then she would fall back on her savings. If she went on limiting her pleasures at the present rate they might be £50 by that time. Her prospects looked dark as the river.

But

But it was the present that goaded her thoughts into the even darker future.

She hated her work and the thought of to-morrow.

She saw the rows of girls, she heard the chalk against the black-board.

The girls, their often commonplace, heavy faces, their awkward, undeveloped figures, their dress already betraying vanity and vulgarity—she saw herself grinding them.

They liked her, of course ; every one liked her. She wished they would hate her. She was lonely—desperate. For friends her colleagues ; their outlook, their common shop, stifled her. “What are we doing with all these girls ?” she asked herself.

“We are making them upright, sensible women, who will not argue in a circle or manœuvre to get husbands,” Katharine had said. Would Katharine never see that *not* doing things is not enough for a woman ? She believed they were overworking these girls. “We are killing the spirit in them,” she thought, “as it has been killed in me.”

In the thought of her work there was no comfort.

And then, had her own nature no needs beyond being sensible ? She thought of life as it had been in her imaginings, in her dreams, and as it even might be in reality. What was her part in it ?

To be sensible

There was love, and there was home, and there was reasonable rest, and there was the exaltation of spirit that art can give, and music and poetry and nature ; and the voice of a hideous mockery said :

“You can be sensible.”

As she heard it more and more clearly, as a voice outside, she defied it from within, where something told her that the crowning
act

act of common sense would be a plunge, death and darkness in reality, not this horrible pretence.

And then she was walking along towards the station with Tom Dawson. Neither had spoken of the strangeness of meeting there. They were walking silently side by side. Neither spoke, but as they neared the station their steps grew slower and slower. In the light of a lamp she saw his face with sudden clearness.

"You too," she thought. "No, not you. I can bear it, but not you. Tom's moody. Tom's this and that"—came back to her in Ella's voice, with its shallow, pleasant little clang. They walked, thinking—he of her face as he had seen it before she saw him, she of him. Her heart was beating with sudden sympathy, but she was living. For him, every day, Ella's commonplaces—Ella's affection.

Every day to work hard at distasteful work, for an income barely sufficient for Ella's little fancies. How had it ever happened? With his face, with his mind!

On the short journey home they hardly looked at each other or spoke, but the few necessary words were spoken in the voices of loving friends.

He stopped at the garden gate of her lodgings.

"Is Miss Grey at home?"

"No, there is no light in our room."

And he followed her in, and stood close at her side while she lit the lamp. She thought she heard his heart beating.

Her common sense said "Speak—say anything—about Ella—about to-morrow, or yesterday, or the day before."

But she stood by him, motionless and trembling.

Then her common sense made a fresh effort.

"Speak"—it commanded: for the silence was drawing them closer each moment.

The commonplace words that divide were slipping further and further from her thought.

"Anything would do," she said, vaguely, to herself—"anything about the bazaar—about—the school."

But the command had become mere words in her brain. It was the evening of her revolt. Instead of speaking she lifted her eyes—and he had been waiting, knowing that she must, and that he would hold her in his arms. She had not resisted—she had leant her cheek against his, and put her arms around his neck. Not until they had moved apart for a moment, her cheeks flushed and she was frightened.

"Don't think, my darling," he said. "Don't, don't; we have such a little while together."

And he drew her close again.

"My little one—my love—my life," he murmured to her. "And I found you in all that darkness."

"And I you. The river was so dreadful, just as things are——"

"Yes, I knew—I saw what you were feeling, and I knew—because I too——"

"Yes—yes, I know—I knew——"

There was a footstep on the gravel path.

"Katharine," said Lucy, despairingly, but without a start; and not until she heard her hand on the door she rose and stood by the mantel-piece.

"May I introduce Mr. Dawson, Katharine?"

Katharine was pleased to meet him, and she had plenty to say.

Lucy picked her hat up from the floor, and stood silent. Katharine thought, as she had often thought, it was a pity Lucy would not talk to strangers; she did not do herself justice. She had said a good deal on several subjects, before Tom Dawson rose.

Public

Public spirit in girls' schools—vegetarianism—she wished to try it, as also, it seemed, rational dress and cremation. How long was he there? Neither he nor Lucy had the slightest idea, but he knew a moment would come when he must leave.

But he must ensure seeing Lucy to-morrow.

"We shall see you to-morrow," he said to her; "it is Ella's 'At-Home' day?"

"Yes, I will come," said Lucy.

He was gone.

"Well," said Katharine, "I don't think he's very entertaining, do you? I don't think he's a great improvement on his wife. I thought you said he was interesting?"

Lucy moved.

"Don't go to bed this minute," Katharine pleaded.

Standing, her cheeks still flushed, she heard, as though in the distance, Katharine's tales.

"I know it's no use paying you compliments, but you're looking wonderfully pretty to-night, Lucy; your hair suits you loose like that."

And then, at last, she let her shut her bedroom door and be alone.

Lucy was at school again at nine o'clock the next morning.

Four hours teaching, dinner, preparation, and then Ella's "At Home."

She was counting the hours to Ella's "At Home." Seven hours more, seven hours more, six hours and three quarters, she kept saying to herself, as she explained to the elementary Euclid class the curious things about right angles.

Five minutes between each lesson.

She did not to go the teachers' room, she stayed in the empty class-rooms, and whether she shut her eyes a moment, or whether they

they rested on the blackboard or the maps, or the trees outside, she was absurdly, childishly happy.

No questions—no conscience—she was Lucy Wren to-day—not the safe friend of Ella's husband—not the best companion for girls—not the woman every one was the better for knowing—she was just herself. She saw a child talking in class. She ought to give her a bad mark. She did not do it, and she revelled in her little injustice.

Another lesson and another little break.

If he had not come ! There by the river ! What would have happened ? She did not know. "Only if we had not found each other !" That was the thought that made her shudder. But they had ! They had ! Only five hours more to Ella's "At Home !"

It was Ella's "At Home," and Ella's husband. But what had Ella to do with either ? Ella, with her mind so full of little things, so content with herself and with Tom. Did she envy Ella ? Envy Ella ? What a funny idea, how had it come into her head ?

"Miss Wren, can I speak to you ! I want to give you the fifth form next term. They are nice girls, but their tone isn't just what I should wish. It's a difficult age, their home influences are bad, frivolous. It's more advanced work than you have had, I'm afraid you'll find it hard, but I feel so sure that your influence is the best they could have."

It was the head mistress, and it was settled that next term Lucy should have the fifth form, and her salary would be raised ; and there were only three hours now to get through before Ella's "At Home !"

• • • • •

Ella was happy. She was having quite an intimate talk with one or two dear friends before the others came.

"How

"How shocking!" she said more than once, and when she said that, you might be sure that she was enjoying herself.

Lucy sat apart—turning over a book. Ella thought she was reading and let her alone.

Scraps of their talk reached her now and then—just now it was about some girl, a governess who had been flirting, and it seemed with somebody's husband.

"She was sent off at once."

That gave the dismayed ladies some small comfort.

"But fancy carrying on like that," one gasped.

"And trusted so, and recommended by a clergyman."

"What really happened?" asked Ella. In low tones Ella was told that some one came into the conservatory—and they were there, kissing each other.

"And recommended by a clergyman," Ella repeated.

"And dressing so quietly."

"Really one's never safe."

And tale after tale of the audacity of their sex went the round of the party.

It was a pity, even Ella thought it rather a pity, that just then Tom and a friend should come in, and the conversation should take another direction.

There was a buzz of talk, and tea-cups were handed round.

"If only she would undertake it, my friend, Miss Wren, would be an excellent person to take your girls abroad," said Ella to a lady who was making anxious inquiries for a suitable person, "but she's so much appreciated where she is. She's over there," she said in a lower voice glancing towards Lucy.

The lady looked.

"The girl your husband is standing by, a quiet reliable-looking little person?"

"Yes,

"Yes, that's Lucy."

"She looks the very thing. Not pretty, but not exactly a dowd. My girls wouldn't care to be sent off with a dowd."

"Sugar?" said Tom, slowly.

"No thanks," said Lucy.

He dropped a lump into her cup.

"Tom!" exclaimed Ella, whose eyes and ears were everywhere. "Lucy said no—give it me, dear, I'll take it out."

Two Pictures

By Charles Conder

I. A Fairy Prince

II. A Masque





Sir Julian Garve

By Ella D'Arcy

A YOUNG man, an American, the latest addition to the hotel colony on the cliff, spent his first evening as all newcomers invariably do ; having dined, he strolled down the broad, villa-bordered road, to the Casino on the shore, and went into the gambling rooms to look at the play. He stopped by the baccarat table.

The sitters were ringed round by a double row of men, who stood and staked over their shoulders. But the stranger, on account of his height, could follow the game easily, and had a good view of the individual who held the bank. This was a man of forty-eight or fifty years of age, handsome, and even distinguished looking. Noting his well-cut clothes, and his imperturbable, his almost stolid demeanour, the stranger guessed at once that he was British. And in spite of the heavy jaw, of the general stolidity, he was struck by something fascinating in the man, by something which suggested to him manifold experiences.

He made these reflections as he idly watched the game. The dealer manipulated the cards with the rapidity and precision of the habitual player. Turning up his own hand he displayed the nine of spades and the ace of diamonds. He helped himself to a
third

third card, and in conformity with an assenting grunt from either side, flung cards to right and left. A murmur arose, half disgust and wholly admiration, for the continued run of luck, which gave the bank, for its third card, the eight of diamonds. The croupier raked together the coloured ivory counters and pushed them over to the Englishman, who swept them into a careless heap and prepared to deal again.

The American, watching, found that his thoughts had travelled to a certain "Professor" Deedes, a professor of conjuring, whose acquaintance he had made at Saratoga during the preceding summer; an ingenuous, an amusing, a voluble little fellow, who had shown him some surprising tricks with plates and tumblers, with coins and cards. With cards, in particular, the little man had been colossal. In his hands, these remained no mere oblong pieces of pasteboard, but became a troupe of tiny *familiars*, each endowed with a magical knowledge of the Professor's wishes, with an unfailing alacrity in obeying them. One of his tricks had been to take an ordinary pack of fifty-two cards, previously examined and shuffled by the looker-on, and to deal from it nothing but kings and aces; apparently fifty-two kings and aces. Then fanning out this same pack face downwards, he would invite you to draw a card, and no matter which card you drew, and though you drew many times in succession, invariably this card proved to be—say, the seven of diamonds. He would turn his back while you ran the pack over, making a visual selection; and the card selected not only divined your choice, but once in the hands of the Professor, found a means of communicating that choice to its master. The young man had been amazed. "But suppose you were to play a game of chance, eh?" The Professor had replied that he never permitted himself to play games of chance. "Without meaning it, from mere force of habit,

habit, I should arrange the cards, I should give myself the game." To demonstrate how safely he could do so, he had dealt as for baccarat, giving himself a total of nine pips every time, and although the young man had been prepared for an exhibition of sleight of hand, although he had been on the look out for it, not to save his life could he have said how it was done.

Now, as he stood watching the play in the Casino, his interest in the game faded before his interest in the problem, as to why at this particular moment, the Saratogan Professor should rise so vividly before his eyes? It had been a mere twenty-four hour acquaintanceship, the distraction of a couple of unoccupied afternoons, a thousand succeeding impressions and incidents had superimposed themselves over it since, he had played baccarat a hundred times since, without giving a thought to Deedes. Why then did a picture of the man, of his good humour, his volubility, his unparalleled dexterity, usurp such prominence among his memories at this particular time?

Preparatory to dealing again, the banker glanced round the table, first at the sitters, then at the circle of men who surrounded them. Here his eye caught the eye of the stranger, and during the brief instant that their glances remained interlocked, the Englishman came to the conclusion that the new-comer had already been observing him for some little time. Then he proceeded with the deal.

When he looked up next he found the stranger occupying the fourth chair to the right, in the place of Morris, the Jew diamond-broker, who had gone. Instead of that gentleman's pronounced Hebrew physiognomy, he saw a young face, betraying a dozen races and a million contradictions, with dark hair parted down the
middle,

middle, hair which had gone prematurely white on top. So that, to the Englishman, with a bit of Herrick running in his mind, the stranger had the appearance of having thrust his head into Mab's palace, and brought away on it all the cobweb tapestries which adorn her walls.

The young man had a broad and full forehead; wore a *pince-nez* which did not conceal the vivacious quality of his eyes, and a black beard, short cut and pointed, which did its best to supplement his lack of chin. "Intellectual, witty and humane, compliant as a woman," commented the Englishman, summing up the stranger's characteristics, and he was struck with the young man's hands as he moved them to and fro over the cloth—long-fingered and finely modelled hands. He was struck with their flexibility, with their grace. He found himself looking at them with speculation.

"*Faites vos jeux, Messieurs,*" cried the voice of the croupier, and the players pushed their counters over the dividing line. "*Messieurs vos jeux sont faits ? Rien ne va plus.*"

The bank lost, won, lost again; seemed in for a run of ill-luck. Re-heartened, the players increased their stakes, and Fortune immediately shifted her wheel, and the croupier's impassive rake pushed everything on the table over to the banker. The young man with the *pince-nez* lost five hundred marks, a thousand, two thousand, in succession. With a steady hand and *insouciant* air, he doubled his stake every time, but the bank continued to win, and the players and bystanders began to look at him with curiosity. He put down five thousand marks and lost it; he put down ten thousand and saw them raked away.

"Well, that's about cleaned me out," he observed in a casual tone, and got up, to perceive that had he held on for but one more deal he would have recouped all his previous losses. For no sooner had

had he risen than the bank lost to the side he had just left. His demeanour on receiving this insult at the hands of the jade who had just injured him, if not imperturbable like the Englishman's—and on the contrary, it was all animation—was quite as undecipherable. Not the shrewdest scrutiny could detect whether or no the heart was heavy within, whether the brain which worked behind those astute blue eyes was a prey to anxiety, or in reality as untroubled as those eyes chose to proclaim.

Yet the loss of a thousand pounds would break half the world, and seriously cripple nine-tenths of the remaining half.

The Englishman followed him with thoughtful eyes, as he lighted a cigarette, and with his hands thrust into his trouser pockets, sauntered away into the vestibule.

The young man wandered up and down the marble floor of the vestibule, coaxing his feet to keep straight along a certain line of green marble lozenges which were set at the corners of larger slabs. He amused himself by imagining there was a tremendous precipice on either side of the line, down which the smallest false step would precipitate him. Meanwhile, the man he liked best in the world walked by his side, and endeavoured to draw his attention to more weighty matters.

"There was something crooked about his play, I'll bet you," insinuated this Other. "Why else did you think of the little Professor?"

"Hang it all!" said the young man, carefully keeping his equilibrium, "why shouldn't I think of him? And you see if I could have held on for another turn, I should have won everything back."

"Don't tell me footle like that," came the answer. "Don't tell

tell me that if your money had been lying on the table the cards would have fallen as they did. But the bank could well afford to lose just then, since the players, intimidated by your losses, had staked so modestly."

The young man arrived safely at the last lozenge, turned, and began the perilous journey back. The Other Fellow turned with him, insisting at his ear: "The man's a card-sharper, a swindler, some poor devil of a half-pay captain, some *chevalier d'industrie* who can't pay his hotel bill."

"You're quite out of it!" returned the young man warmly "His whole personality refutes you."

"Let's make it a question of character," said the Other Fellow, "and I bet you—well, I bet you twopence that his character won't stand the laxest investigation."

A moment later they both came across Morris. The diamond broker had rendered Underhill a small service earlier in the day. His condescension in accepting that service gave him the right now of putting a question.

"Who was the chap holding the bank at the baccarat table?" he asked.

"That was Sir Julian Garve, Bart.," said Morris, rolling the words about, as though they were a sweet morsel under the tongue.

"Genuine baronet?"

"As good as they make 'em. Looked him up in Burke. Seats at Knowle and Buckhurst. Arms quarterly or and gules, a bend over all, vert. Though what the devil that means, I'm sure I don't know. Supporters, two leopards, spotted."

"Progenitors of the common garden carriage dog, probably," murmured the young man to his beard. Then, "Hard up?" he queried.

"Looks like it!" answered Morris ironically. "Best rooms

at

at the best hotel in the town, his own cart and blood mares over from England ; everything in tip-top style."

"It's very interesting," remarked the young man smiling, and when he smiled his eyelids came together leaving a mere horizontal gleam of blue.

"Oh, he's very interesting," repeated Morris ; "has done a lot, and seen no end."

"I think I should like to know him," observed the young man nonchalantly, and resumed his peregrinations.

The baccarat party broke up, and Garve, entering the vestibule, arrested Morris in his turn.

"Do you know who it was took your seat at the table this evening ?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes ; know him well. His name's Underhill. He's an American. Only landed at Hamburg this morning. I happened to be up at the Kronprinz when he arrived, and knowing the ropes there, was able to get him a better room than even the almighty dollar would have procured him."

Garve pondered. "It's to be hoped he's got the almighty dollar in good earnest," said he. "Do you know he's dropped a thousand pounds ?"

Morris whistled.

"By-the-bye, has he any one with him ?" asked the baronet.

"No, he's quite alone. Come to Europe to study art or literature or some tommy-rot of that sort."

"Then the money was probably his year's screw. I feel very sorry about it."

Morris thought there was no need to fret ; evidently he was a millionaire. How else could he afford to waste his time studying art ?

But

But Garve stuck to his own opinion.

"Unless my intuitions are very much at fault," said he, in an impressive undertone, "to-night has struck him a heavy blow. I've known men put an end to themselves for less. You remember poor O'Hagan two seasons back?"

"Oh, yes; but O'Hagan was an emotional Irishman. This chap's not a Yankee for nothing. He's got his head screwed on the right way if ever a man had. Don't think I ever saw a cuter specimen."

Garve looked at the diamond merchant with a tolerant smile. "Of course, being an American, he's necessarily cute, while Irishmen are necessarily emotional, and Englishmen like myself necessarily slow-witted but honest. You allow for no shades in your character-painting. However, I'll try to believe, in this matter, you're right. Look here, he's coming this way now," he added in a moment; "can't you introduce him to me?"

Morris was proud to be in a position to gratify a baronet's wish.

"Allow me to make you and my friend Sir Julian Garve acquainted," said he, as the young man with the *pince-nez* was about to pass them by. "Mr. Francis Underhill, of New York. You'll be surprised at my having got your name and description so pat, but I took the liberty of reading it in the hotel book when I was up there to-day."

The young man removed his glasses, polished them lightly on his silk handkerchief, and readjusted them with care for the purpose of looking the speaker up and down. ("Damn his cheek!" the Other Fellow had suggested at his ear.)

"No liberty taken by a member of your talented race would ever surprise me, Mr. Moses," he replied.

"My name's Morris," corrected the diamond broker, stiffly.

"Ah,

"Ah, yes, I remember you told me so before ; but you see I omitted to impress it on my mind by a reference to the Visitors' Book."

Garve, listening with an air of weary amusement, again caught Underhill's eye, and their glances again interlocked as before at the table. But Garve only said : "I was sorry you had such bad luck to-night." And Underhill thought that the quality of his voice was delightful ; it was rich, soft, harmonious. But then, all English voices delighted his ear.

"Yes," he admitted, "luck was decidedly against me."

Morris alone was unconscious of the dot-long pause which distinguished the word luck.

"To-morrow night you will come and take your revenge," Garve predicted ; but there was a note of inquiry in his voice.

"I shall certainly come and play to-morrow," affirmed the young man.

"That's right !" said Garve, cordially. "We shall be glad to see you. We admired your coolness. You're an old hand at the game, evidently."

The attendants were making their presence felt ; they were waiting to close the Casino. The three men went out upon the terrace in front, and Garve prepared to take leave.

"You are staying at the Kronprinz, I think ?" he said to Underhill. "Then our ways don't lie together, for I always put up in the town. I went there first, long before the cliff hotels were thought of. You came down the upper road, of course ? Then, take my advice, and go back by the sands. They're as smooth and firm as a billiard-table, and with this moonlight, you'll have a magnificent walk. Presently you'll come to a zig-zag staircase cut in the cliff, which will bring you up right opposite your hotel."

Underhill

Underhill and Morris remained some little time longer leaning against the stone balustrade. Above them was a moon-suffused sky, before them a moon-silvered sea. The shrubberies of the Casino gardens sloped down on every side. Over the tops of the foliage on the left glittered the glass dome of the Badeaustaldt, with vacant surrounding sands, which gleamed wetly where the Dürren, dividing into a hundred slender rivulets, flows across them in shallow channels to the sea. Beyond, again, the wooded, widely curved horn of the bay closed in the western prospect.

Only the extreme tip of the right horn was visible, for immediately to the right of the Casino the land rises abruptly and out-thrusts seawards a bold series of cliffs, crowned from time immemorial by the famous pine forests of Schoenewalder, and, within recent years, by a dozen monster sanatoria and hotels.

Underhill leaned upon the balustrade and looked seawards. He had forgotten his insolence to Morris (he had forgotten Morris's existence), and the Jew had entirely forgiven it. He forgave a good deal in the course of the day to the possessors of rank or wealth. But he was not destitute of good feeling. He was genuinely sorry for the young man, whose silence he attributed to a natural depression on account of his loss. He had a great deal to say next day on the subject of Underhill's low spirits.

When he turned to go, Morris escorted him through the garden. He wished he could have gone all the way with him, and said so. Terror of Mrs. Morris, whom he knew to be sitting up for him at the Villa Rose, alone prevented him. But this he did not say.

Underhill responded with polite abstraction, and they parted on the crest of the Jew's perfervid hope, that they should meet again next day.

The young man sprang lightly down the path which wound to the shore. His first graceless sensation was one of relief that that little boulder had left him. Then, catching sight of the black shadow walking with him over the sands, he made it a courtly salutation.

"For I must confess I'm never in such pleasant company as when I'm alone with you, my dear," he addressed it. The shadow flourished its hat in acknowledgment, and the companions walked on amicably.

"Yet I fancy that fellow Garve could be pleasant company too!" he threw out tentatively.

"Only it's a pity he cheats at cards, eh?"

"Bah, bah! Who says that he cheated? Isn't it less improbable to believe it was luck than to believe that a man of his position, his wealth, and his appearance—for you'll admit, I suppose, that his appearance is in his favour—is a mere card-sharper, a swindler?"

"Why, then, did you think of the little professor?"

"Toujours cette rengaine!" cried Underhill, with indignation. "What makes me think of the man in the moon at the present moment?"

"Why, the moonlight, of course, you blooming duffer!" chuckled his opponent. "Which establishes my case. Thoughts don't spring up spontaneous in the mind, any more than babies spring up spontaneous under bushes. The kid and the thought are both connected with something which has gone before, although I'll admit that the parentage of both may sometimes be a little difficult to trace. But that gives zest to the pursuit. Now, up on the terrace with Moses, you were thinking that when your year in Europe's over, you'll go home, and ask your delicious little cousin, Annie Laurie, to be your wife."

Underhill

Underhill broke off to murmur,

“It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived, whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee.”

“Oh, stick to business!” urged the other. “What made you think of Annie?”

“Well, if you really must know,” confessed the young man, “I was thinking of my indulgent father and my adoring mother. As Annie Laurie lives with them the connection is obvious.”

“And what made you think of your parents?”

“I was back in God’s country.”

“How did you get there?”

“Let me see. . . . Ah, yes! I stood on the terrace, looking out over the sea, and observed in the distance the smoke of a steamer. But I don’t surely need to follow the thread further, for a person of your intelligence.”

“No, but you perceive that you can’t possess a thought that hasn’t its ancestry lying behind it, any more than you can get from the moonlight here to the shadow there by the cliffs without leaving footprints to show the way you went. Now, when you stood at the baccarat table this evening, what made you think of the little Professor?”

“My dear chap,” said Underhill, “you make me tired. There is such a thing as pressing a point too far. And, since you were good enough to call my attention to the fact that the cliff throws a shadow, I’m going to extinguish your Socratic questionings by walking in it. *Buona sera!*”

He rounded a spur of cliff, keeping close to its base.

“This

"This maiden she had no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me;
I was a child and she was a child
In this kingdom by the sea.
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee."

"Now what's the parentage of that quotation? The similarity of the initials of course. Oh, my dear, far be it from me to deny your cleverness!" he concluded gaily, and entered the next cove.

Across it moved a figure, a real figure, not a shadow, going from him. The hands, holding a light bamboo, were clasped behind the back.

"By Jove, it's Garve!" thought Underhill and hurried after him. Garve turned round in surprise.

"I didn't think there was much likelihood of my overtaking you," said he, "but it never occurred to me you could overtake me. You remained up at the Casino?"

"And you didn't go home after all, but put your advice to me into practice instead? Well, it was good advice too. The walk is superb. It's the sort of night when the thought of bed is a sacrilege."

"Even when at home I never go to bed until daybreak," remarked Garve. "In civilised countries, I go on playing until then. But here, a grandmotherly government shuts the Casino at twelve."

"A grandmotherly government knows that otherwise you wouldn't leave a red cent in the place," said the young man with a quizzical flash of blue through his glasses.

Garve stopped to scrutinise him.

"My

"My luck isn't altogether luck perhaps," said he, walking on again.

"No?" (With exaggerated surprise.)

"No," pursued Garve, "it's keeping a cool head, and carefully regulating my life with a view to my play in the evening. I live on cards. I dine at four in the afternoon off roast mutton and rice pudding——"

"Good Lord, how tragic!"

"I go to bed at six and sleep till ten. Then I get up, take a cup of coffee and a biscuit, and come into the rooms with all my wits about me. Naturally, I stand a better chance than the men who've finished off a day of peg-drinking by a heavy indigestible dinner and half a dozen different wines."

The young man was amazed, interested, delighted with the absurdity of such an existence.

"As an amusement cards are good enough," said he; "or even at a pinch they might provide the means of livelihood. But why in the world a man of your position should make such sacrifices at their shrine——"

"My position," Garve broke in bitterly, "simply necessitates my spending more money than other men, without furnishing me the wherewithal to do it. I suppose it seems incredible to you Americans, that a man of old family, a man with a handle to his name, shouldn't possess a brass farthing to bless himself with?"

"Yet I understood from our friend Moses that you had town houses and country houses, manservants and maidservants, oxen and asses, not to mention spotted leopards and bloodstock over from England."

The impertinence of this speech was deprived of its sting by the friendly whimsicality of Underhill's manner. Garve accepted it in perfect good part.

"It's

"It's just as well Morris and the rest of that crew should think so, but the truth is, I succeeded to an encumbered estate, the rent-roll of which barely suffices to pay the mortgage interest. Knowles is let furnished, Buckhurst is so dilapidated no one will hire it. I can't sell, because of the entail. I can't work, for I was never given a profession. I can only play cards; and by playing systematically and regulating, as I tell you, my whole life to that end, I manage to pay my way."

"Twenty thousand dollars in a night," murmured the Other Fellow at Underhill's ear, "would not only pay your way but pave it too. Not?"

"Oh, dry up!" advised the young man. "You're such a damned literal chap! Can't you see he's speaking metaphorically?"

"So now, you understand the tragedy of the cold mutton," Garve concluded smiling. They walked on a bit in silence, until Garve resumed in exactly the same even, melodious voice in which he had last spoken, "You thought I cheated to-night, didn't you?"

Underhill was inexpressibly shocked and pained by this sudden, naked confrontation with his thought. Besides, he thought it no longer. Garve's explanations had convinced him of Garve's probity; he was subjugated by Garve's charm.

"No, no, no! Don't say such things!" he protested. "A thousand times no!"

"All the same, you thought I cheated," repeated Garve, standing still and looking at him oddly. "And—I did cheat! . . . I lost only when it suited my purpose to lose. Every time I had forced the cards."

He remained imperturbable, cold, as he said this. It was, perhaps, only the moonlight that made his handsome face look haggard and pale.

On the other hand, it was the young American who coloured up to the roots of his hair, who was overcome with horror, who was conscious of all the shame, of all the confusion which the confessed swindler might be supposed to feel. And when Garve sat down on a boulder, and covered his face with his hand, Underhill longed to sink through the earth, that he might not witness his humiliation.

He tried to say something comforting. The words would not form themselves, or stumbled out disjointedly, irrelevantly.

Garve did not listen.

"I've lost the last thing I had in the world to lose," said he ; "my honour. I carry a besmirched name. I am a ruined, a broken man. You found me out to-night. Even if you spare me, another will find me out another night. And how to live with the knowledge that you know my shame ! How to live ! How to live !"

He got up. His stick lay on the sand. He took a few uncertain steps with bowed head, and his hand thrust into his breast. He came back to where the young man stood.

"There's but one thing left for me to do," said he, looking at him with sombre eyes, "and that's to shoot myself. Don't you see yourself it's all that remains for me to do ?"

Underhill's quick brain envisaged the man's whole life, the infamy of it, the pathos of it. He recognised the impossibility of living down such a past, he foresaw the degrading years to come. He knew that Garve had found the only solution possible. He knew it was what he himself would do in the same hideous circumstances. Yet how could he counsel this other to do it ? This other for whom his heart was wrung, for whom he felt warm sympathy, compassion, brotherliness. Oh, there must be some other way !

While

While he hesitated, while he searched for it, Garve repeated his proposition. "There's only one thing for me to do, shoot myself, eh? Or," he paused . . . "shoot the man who's found me out? I might, for instance, shoot you."

Underhill was conscious of a smart blow on the ear. He started back looking at Garve with surprise. For the fraction of a second he thought Garve had really shot him . . . but that was absurd . . . a little blow like that! Yet what then did he mean by it? Garve stood staring across at him, staring, staring, and between the fingers of his right hand, which was falling back to his side, was a glint of steel. Motionless in air between them hung a tiny swirl of smoke.

"Is it possible? is it possible?" Underhill asked himself. And all at once Garve seemed to be removed an immense way off; he saw him blurred, wavering, indistinct. Then it was no longer Garve, it was his father, over whose shoulder appeared his mother's face, and Annie Laurie's. . . He tried to spring to them, but his legs refused to obey him. He dropped to his knees instead, and all thought and all sensation suddenly ceased . . . the body sank over into the sand.

Two Prose Fancies

By Richard Le Gallienne

I—Sleeping Beauty

“**E**VERY woman is a sleeping beauty,” I said, sententiously.
“Only some need more waking than others?” replied my cynical friend.

“Yes, some will only awaken at the kiss of great love or great genius, which are not far from the same thing,” I replied.

“I see,” said the gay editor with whom I was talking.

Our conversation was of certain authors of our acquaintance, and how they managed their inspiration, of what manner were their muses, and what the methods of their stimulus. Some, we had noted, throve on constancy, to others inconstancy was the lawless law of their being; and so accepted had become these indispensable conditions of their literary activity that the wives had long since ceased to be jealous of the other wives. To a household dependent on poetry, constancy in many cases would mean poverty, and certain good literary wives had been known to rate their husbands with a lazy and unproductive faithfulness. The editor sketched a tragic *ménage* known to him, where the husband, a lyric poet of fame, had become so chronically devoted to his despairing wife that destitution stared them in the face. It was
in

in vain that she implored him, with tears in her eyes, to fall in love with some other woman. She, she alone, he said, must be his inspiration ; but as the domesticated muse is too often a muse of exquisite silence, too happy to sing its happiness, this lawful passion, which might otherwise have been turned to account, was unproductive too.

"And such a pretty woman," said the editor sympathetically. Of another happier case of domestic hallucination, he made the remark : "Says he owes it all to his wife ! and you never saw such a plain woman in your life."

"How do you know she is plain ?" I asked ; "mayn't it be that the husband's sense of beauty is finer than yours ? Do you think all beauty is for all men ? or that the beauty all can see is best worth seeing ?"

And then we spoke the words of wisdom and wit which I have written in ebony on the lintel of this little house of words. He who would write to live must talk to write, and I confess that I took up this point with my friend, and continued to stick to it, no doubt to his surprise, because I had at the moment some stardust on the subject nebulously streaming and circling through my mind, which I was anxious to shape into something of an ordered world. So I talked not to hear myself speak, but to hear myself think, always, I will anticipate the malicious reader in saying, an operation of my mind of delightful unexpectedness.

"Why ! you're actually thinking," chuckles one's brain to itself, "go on. Dance while the music's playing," and so the tongue goes dancing with pretty partners of words, till suddenly one's brain gives a sigh, the wheels begin to slow down, and music and dancing stop together, till some chance influence, a sound, a face, a flower, how or whence we know not, comes to wind it up again.

The more one ponders the mystery of beauty, the more one realises that the profoundest word in the philosophy of æsthetics is that of the simple-subtle old proverb: Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. Beauty, in fact, is a collaboration between the beholder and the beheld. It has no abstract existence, and is visible or invisible as one has eyes to see or not to see it, that is, as one is endowed or not endowed with the sense of beauty, an hieratic sense which, strangely enough, is assumed as common to humanity. Particularly is this assumption made in regard to the beauty of women. Every man, however beauty-blind he may really be, considers himself a judge of women—though he might hesitate to call himself a judge of horses. Far indeed from its being true that the sense of beauty is universal, there can be little doubt that the democracy is for the most part beauty-blind, and that while it has a certain indifferent pleasure in the comeliness that comes of health, and the prettiness that goes with ribbons, it dislikes and fears that finer beauty which is seldom comely, never pretty, and always strange.

National galleries of art are nothing against this truth. Once in a while the nation may rejoice over the purchase of a bad picture it can understand, but for the most part—what to it are all these strange pictures, with their disquieting colours and haunted faces? What reckes the nation at large of its Bellinis or its Botticellis? what even of its Titians or its Tintoretts? Was it not the few who bought them, with the money of the many, for the delight of the few?

Well, as no one would dream of art-criticism by *plébiscite*, why should universal conventions of the beauty of women find so large an acceptance merely because they are universal? There are vast multitudes, no doubt, who deem the scented-soap beauties of Bouguereau more beautiful than the strange ladies of Botticelli,
and,

and, were you to inquire, you would discover that your housemaid wonders to herself, as she dusts your pictures to the sound of music-hall song, what you can see in the plain lean women of Burne-Jones, or the repulsive ugliness of "The Blessed Damosel." She thanks heaven that she was not born with such a face, as she takes a reassuring glance in the mirror at her own regular prettiness, and more marketable bloom. For, you see, this beauty is still asleep for her—as but a few years ago it was asleep for all but the artists who first kissed it awake.

All beauty was once asleep like that, even the very beauty your housemaid understands and perhaps exemplifies. It lay asleep awaiting the eye of the beholder, it lay asleep awaiting the kiss of genius; and, just as one day nothing at all seemed beautiful, so some day all things will come to seem so, if the revelation be not already complete.

For indeed much beauty that was asleep fifty years ago has been passionately awakened and given a sceptre and a kingdom since then: the beauty of lonely neglected faces that no man loved, or loved only by stealth, for fear of the mockery of the blind, the beauty of unconventional contours and unpopular colouring, the beauty of pallor, of the red-haired, and the *fausse maigre*. The fair and the fat are no longer paramount, and the beauty of forty has her day.

Nor have the discoveries of beauty been confined to the faces and forms of women. In Nature too the waste places where no man sketched or golfed have been reclaimed for the kingdom of beauty. The little hills had not really rejoiced us till Wordsworth came, but we had learnt his lesson so well that the beauty of the plain slept for us all the longer, till with Tennyson and Millet, it awakened at last—the beauty of desolate levels, solitary moorlands, and the rich melancholy of the fens.

Wherever

Wherever we turn our eyes, we find the beauty of character supplanting the beauty of form, or if not supplanting, asserting its claim to a place beside the haughty sister who would fain keep Cinderella, red-headed and *retroussée*, in the background—yes ! and for many even supplanting ! It is only when regularity of form and personal idiosyncrasy and intensity of character are united in a face, that the so-called classical beauty is secure of holding its own with those whose fealty most matters—and that union to any triumphant degree is exceedingly rare. Even when that union has come about there are those, in this war of the classicism and romanticism of faces, who would still choose the face dependent on pure effect for its charm ; no mask of unchanging beauty, but a beauty whose very life is change, and whose magic, so to say, is a miraculous accident, elusive and unaccountable.

Miraculous and unaccountable ! In a sense all beauty is that, but in the case of the regular, so to say, authorised beauty, it seems considerably less so. For in such faces, the old beauty-masters will tell you, the brow is of such a breadth and shape, the nose so long, the mouth shaped in this way, and the eyes set and coloured in that ; and thus, of this happy marriage of proportions, beauty has been born. This they will say in spite of the everyday fact of thousands of faces being thus proportioned and coloured without the miracle taking place, ivory lamps in which no light of beauty burns. And it is this fact that proves the truth of the newer beauty we are considering. Form is thus seen to be dependent on expression, though expression, the new beauty-masters would contend, is independent of form. For the new beauty there are no such rules ; it is, so to say, a prose beauty, for which there is no formulated prosody, entirely free and individual in its rhythms, and personal in its effects. Sculpture is

no longer its chosen voice among the arts, but rather music with its myriad meanings, and its infinitely responsive inflections.

You will hear it said of such beauty—that it is striking, individual, charming, fascinating and so on, but not exactly beautiful. This, if you are an initiate of the new beauty, you will resist, and permit no other description but beauty—the only word which accurately expresses the effect made upon you. That such effect is not produced upon others need not depress you; for similarly you might say of the beauty that others applaud that for you it seems attractive, handsome, pretty, dainty and so on, but not exactly beautiful; or admitting its beauty, that it is but one of many types of beauty, the majority of which are neither straight-lined nor regular.

For when it is said that certain faces are not exactly beautiful, what is meant is that they fail to conform to one or other of the straight-lined types; but by what authority has it been settled once and for all that beauty cannot exist outside the straight line and the chubby curve? It matters not what authority one were to bring, for vision is the only authority in this matter, and the more ancient the authority the less is it final, for it has thus been unable to take account of all the types that have come into existence since its day, types spiritual, intellectual and artistic, born of the complex experience of the modern world.

And yet it has not been the modern world alone that has awakened that beauty independent of, and perhaps greater than, the beauty of form and colour; rather it may be said to have reawakened it by study of certain subtle old masters of the Renaissance; and the great beauties who have made the tragedies and love-stories of the world, so far as their faces have been preserved to us, were seldom “beautiful,” as the populace would understand beauty. For perhaps the highest beauty is
visible

visible only to genius, or that great love which, we have said, is a form of genius. It was only, it will be remembered, at the kiss of a prince that Sleeping Beauty might open her wonderful eyes.

II—A Literary Omnibus

THERE were ten of us travelling life's journey together from Oxford Circus to the Bank, one to fall away early at Tottenham Court Road, leaving his place unfilled till we steamed into Holborn at Mudie's, where, looking up to make room for a new arrival, I perceived, with an unaccustomed sense of being at home in the world, that no less than four of us were reading. It became immediately evident that in the new arrival our reading party had made an acquisition, for he carried three books in a strap, and to the fourth, a dainty blue cloth volume with rough edges, he presently applied a paper-knife with that eager tenderness which there is no mistaking. The man was no mere lending library reader. He was an aristocrat, a poet among readers, a bookman *pur sang*. We were all more or less of the upper crust ourselves, with the exception of a dry and dingy old gentleman in the remote corner who, so far as I could determine, was deep in a digest of statutes. His interest in the new-comer was merely an automatic raising of the head as the bus stopped, and an automatic sinking of it back again as we once more rumbled on. The rest of us, however, were not so poorly satisfied. This fifth reader to our coach had suddenly made us conscious of our freemasonry, and henceforward there was no peace for us till we had, by the politest stratagems of observation, made out the titles of the books from which as from beakers our eyes were silently and strenuously drinking such different thoughts and dreams.

The

The lady third from the door on the side facing me was reading a book which gave me no little trouble to identify, for she kept it pressed on her lap with tantalising persistence, and the headlines, which I was able to spell out with eyes grown telescopic from curiosity, proved those tiresome headlines which refer to the contents of chapter or page instead of considerably repeating the title of the book. It was not a novel. I could tell that, for there wasn't a scrap of conversation, and it wasn't novelist's type. I watched like a lynx to catch a look at the binding. Suddenly she lifted it up, I cannot help thinking out of sheer kindness, and it proved to be a stately unfamiliar edition of a book I should have known well enough, simply *The French Revolution*. Why will people tease one by reading Carlyle in any other edition but the thin little octavos, with the sticky brown and black bindings of old?

The pretty dark-haired girl next but one on my own side, what was she reading? No! . . . But she was, really!

Need I say that my eyes beat a hasty retreat to my little neighbour, the new-comer, who sat facing me next to the door, one of whose books in the strap I had instantly recognised as *Weir of Hermiston*. Of the other two, one was provokingly turned with the edges only showing, and of the edges I couldn't be quite sure, though I was almost certain they belonged to an interesting new volume of poems I knew of. The third had the look of a German dictionary. But, of course, it was the book he was reading that was the chief attraction, and I rather like to think that probably I was the only one of his fellow travellers who succeeded in detecting the honey-pot from which he was delicately feeding. It took me some little time, though the book, with its ribbed blue cover gravely lined with gold and its crisp rose-yellow paper, struck me with instant familiarity. "Preface to Second Edition," deciphered backwards, was all I

was

was able to make out at first, for the paper-knife loitered dreamily among the opening pages, till at last with the turning of a page, the prose suddenly gave place to a page prettily broken up with lines and half-lines of italics, followed by a verse or two—and “Of course,” I exclaimed to myself, with a curious involuntary gratitude, “it is Dr. Wharton’s *Sappho*.”

And so it was. That penny bus was thus carelessly carrying along the most priceless of written words. We were journeying in the same conveyance with

*“Like the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough,
A-top on the topmost twig—which the pluckers forgot somehow—
Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could get it till now.”*

with

“I loved thee, Atthis, long ago.”

with

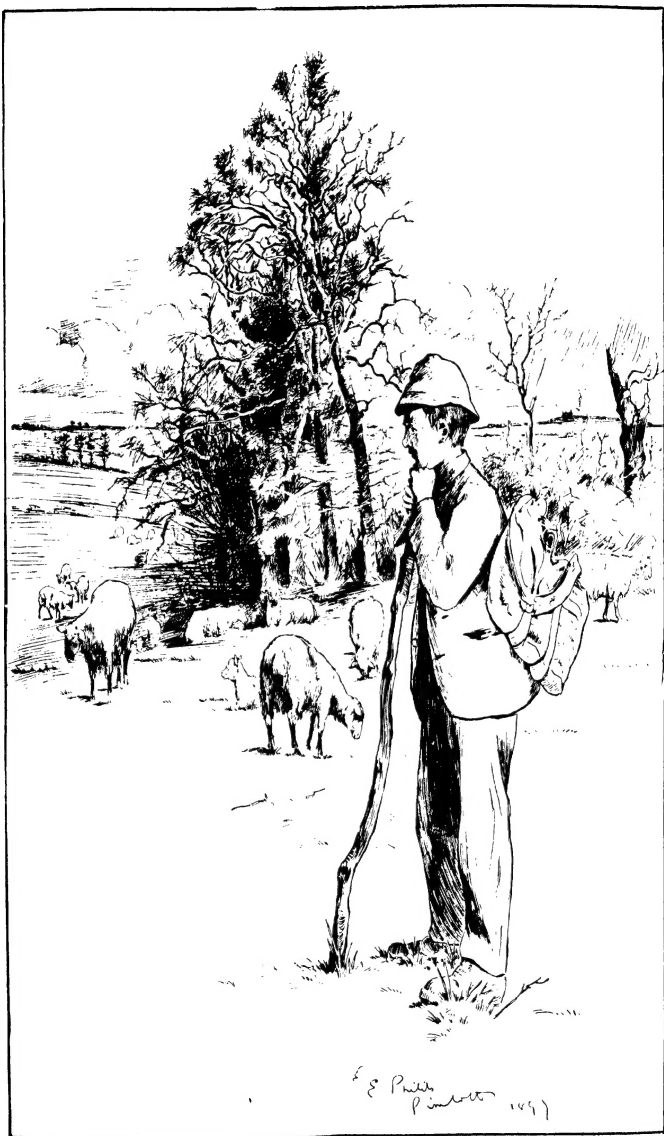
“The moon has set, and the Pleiades; it is midnight, the time is going by, and I sleep alone.”

Yes, it was no less a presence than Sappho’s that had stepped in amongst us at the corner of New Oxford Street. Visibly it had been a little black-bearded bookman, rather French in appearance, possibly a hard-worked teacher of languages—but actually it had been Sappho. So strange are the contrasts of the modern world, so strange the fate of beautiful words. Two thousand five hundred years! So far away from us was the voice that had suddenly called to us, a lovely apparition of sound, as we trundled dustily from Oxford Circus to the Bank.

“The moon has set, and the Pleiades; it is midnight, the time is going by, and I sleep alone,” I murmured, as the conductor dropped me at Chancery Lane.

A Shepherd Boy

By E. Philip Pimlott



E. S. Phillips
Pinner 1891

